

Heather Dohollau. *Une suite de matins.* Bédée : Folle Avoine, 2005. 71 pages. 13 euros. ISBN 2-86810-172-0.

The work of Heather Dohollau has just undergone some intensive scrutiny during the summer of 2005, at one of the classic gatherings orchestrated by the cultural centre at Cerisy-la-Salle. Coinciding with this scrutiny, offered by critics from across Europe and North America, Folle Avoine offered the publication of the twelfth book by the poet of Welsh origins whose work, much admired by other poets as celebrated as Yves Bonnefoy and Philippe Jaccottet, was a few years earlier again honoured by a special colloquium in her city of long-elected residence, Saint-Brieuc: *Une suite de matins*. There is a marked serenity about this work, as about Dohollau's writing as a whole: it is a work founded on the steadiness of a gaze upon the world of the everyday, a gaze yet subtle, aesthetically informed though spiritually inclined, beyond dogma, however, for bathed in the light of a quest and a set of 'findings' of broad and universal high ontological pertinence. Certainly, Heather Dohollau may choose to centre her gaze on the 'secondary' givenness of, say, the work of Vermeer – her poems not uncommonly choose this ekphrastic manner –, but it would be a mistake to see in that choice a distancing from the real, some sort of Mallarméan retreat into the 'repose' and the textual 'interiority' that may seem at times to lure the author of *de Un coup dés* into a disconnected and cerebrally elitist 'act and place' of poietic being. Here is 'Femme à la fenêtre', no doubt a felt *mise en abyme* of Dohollau's own place of observation in relation to the totality of what is:

elle voit le dehors
aux couleurs du dedans
de l'autre côté des vitres
une aisance d'air
fait siège de lumière
mais la main assure
la présence de son corps
en cet espace
là où elle tient une eau
qui lave le monde (56)

No insistence on the formal dimensions of the painting by Vermeer. No appreciation of the structural niceties of line, colour, etc. Rather, the painting viewed as an aperture onto the fact and the manner of our being-in-

the-world, our stunningly mysterious *présence*, in the midst of colour, light, air, matter, space, along with our capacities of immersion in, and appreciation of, such *présence*. Language itself, in consequence, does not assume a position of transcendent pertinence, arrogant superiority, with regard to the lived/the witnessed. Rather, it becomes the channel opening up our return to the exquisite simplicities of a being basking in its ineffable beingness. Drawing us back, beyond language and its traps, its proud meanings, its narcissistic allurements, to the very intangible yet intuitable centre of our experience of what is and who we are... *Une suite de matins* thus grounds itself in an experience, at once direct, visceral, sensuous, and, inevitably, psychic, imaginative, unassumingly visionary, of the earth's endlessly proffered moments. Few voices reach that level of fused tranquil interrogation and unhurried meditation Dohollau's work allows us to attain to. A poetics of no-loss in a spread and contemplative embrace of being's surety.

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