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MICHAEL STONE-RICHARDS & JULIEN LENOIR

Following, Six Transcriptions, preceded by Two Translations

“Mes pas, enfants de mon vigilance.”
—Paul Valéry

Vigilance

In Paris the tower of Saint-Jacques swaying
Like a sunflower
As its brow sometimes scrapes against the Seine and its shadow slips
 imperceptibly amongst the tugboats
At this moment on tiptoes in my sleep
I move towards the chamber where I am laid out
And set fire to it
In order that nothing remains of this consent that had been torn from me.
The suite of furniture then makes place for animals of the same size which
 look at me fraternally
Lions in whose manes chairs realize their self-combustion
Sharks whose white bellies meld with the final frisson of rags
At the hour of love and of blue eyelids
I see myself burning in turn I see this solemn hiding-place of nothings
That was my body
Furrowed by the patient beaks of the ibis of fire
When all is accomplished I enter invisible through the arch
Without paying attention to the passersby of life whose trailing steps fade
 with the distance
I see the filigree of the sun
Through the hawthorn of the rain
I hear the human fabric being torn like a great leaf
Under the claws of absence and of presence in collusion
All the busyness fades away and there remains nothing but a perfumed
 lace
A shell of lace which holds the perfect form of a breast
I touch no more than the heart of things I hold the thread

André Breton, *Le Révolver à cheveux blancs* / The White-Haired Revolver (1932)

André Breton

Oblivion

Oblivion flows back to its source, and our boredom becomes refreshed in the liquid name of André Breton where, with its silvered sheets, its droplets of mercury, it slips and rolls on the light leaves of our pages.

What should it matter that winter may have frozen this source? Beneath the glassy ice the black stones shine—open mineral heart, beautiful dominion of no-possession. About it, the sand is penetrated by the dream of time-pieces, and there right to the thaw, fish make love.

Beneath the glassy ice, we are looked at, recalled. The century's weight bears the shadowed claw: only our terrors and feasts are pierced, the secret spasm of our failing hand. Faced out, disfigured, by the whip, the tamanoir and the uncultured rose.

Portrait

Smooth memory of André Breton and of the starred ravens which were nailed with him to the doors of our night.... What is their weight on our back—and already, imperceptibly, in the straight line of what will be? What solicitous assurance, and of what charge of dawn gives it confirmation?

Cornucopia of shadows—oh, jet of grey powder diffused by the photographs of André Breton, milky way of rare leaves of rare books, this head of hair, these cravats with large stripes, this size of mannequin, under the antique foliages, boarded up, bespeak the terror, joy, the time of glow-worms.

(The old magician, in his clean sleeve, was hiding the tarots, the eggs of Columbus and the pistols. And for the malice, here, take the scarcely believable chin, this sperm whale bone in the vitrine of a parfumeur.)

And the eye more clear than the clearest night. The aurora borealis his daily bred.

At Our Side

Gentler, more implacable, he shines beneath the earth amidst his forest of mandragoras, at the nadir of our hopes. The least hint of our steps wakens him; the least of our missteps triggers the ringing beneath the briar and the mushrooms of his laughter with silver folds. And when we lay this body down, arms outstretched, through the fields, over the tar of cities, there he is who pierces our side, he through whose earth-spring wounds and traps blossom and flower.

In order to invent the day, and all that invents itself, his cloud-filled fingers make us leap into rings of fire. Faithful dance where shall burn the too-transparent skin.

Upon our calcined bones mounts a greasy pole: imagination heaven-sent.

In the morning of his death, cattle and books are marked. There is no longer time to doubt any part of his dream. In the next nightfall, our women will read the name of André Breton close to their stomachs, against these hips where the unlettered transport their children.

—Jean-Luc Nancy
December, 1966

After, unseen

Faced-troubled waters
Heart tremors
Inveterate mirage from the night-pit beckons
and from the sweet sorcery of pastness senses lost revived
Once-upon-a-time river
the banks
transports to landscaped time

—After Jacques Roumain

Song, after Michel Foucault

You fell to ground
light fell upon your face
there in the lovely shade
leaves moved like sprinkled light

L'étant anachronique

I.

The grain opens
at the point exact to every grain

The blackbird from its nest
settles intent to palpable space

But here we are once more in train
our hands together lacking the words of prayer
open towards the heights
letting pass a great timonier angel body

in consequence we are slipping
without place though still waiting

—After Marie-Claire Bancquart

II.

In this city : through hazard : the two young names : unmoving
facing a friend , unmoving : the chamber reduced , immense :
the weighted table of marble : the richness of speech : the
ancient fear. The Thing moves in memory of us .

—After Maurice Blanchot

thorn
in me
more starred

i come
sorrow
pierced

oblivion
nailed
earthbound

explosive immobile. without memory, either.

the grey finds
a tale. loses its hand
among the sleep of stones

let it fall silent
encumbered with bleached bones.

let it be weighted , recumbent.

—After Martine Broda