

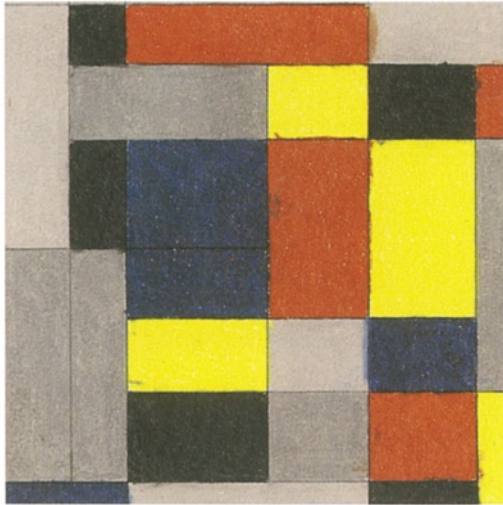
modern colours
wystan curnow



modern colours
wystan curnow



Jack Books Auckland



Mondrian's *Composition* (1920), as it would look using Delbo's unsensitized film

Modern

Colours

they're up

like harlequin

like **Boom!**

in the afternoon

I

PREPARATIONS FOR
AN ECLIPSE

walls are white
while yellow

yellow hangings
yellow on down

sallow mattings
sallow mats lie

serge saffron sofas
sallow sofas saffron

cane chairs share
ochres arcane share

yellow lilies in vases
white and yellow lines

liveried functionaries
grave diggers and red guards

standing in lines waiting
on flanking on black Blank

flanks of the Nothing
red guards delineating

the grave waiting beside
the empty zero Nothing

ladders lying along side
flanks of the black Hole

Nothing the yellow back
of the white back of the

recently uncovered
wet clay pale yellow clay

on their boots in lines
the guards waiting for them

black trousered black
white and red blouses

the suspension of being
for its/their release waiting

when they come the People
of a sudden come in

then in come the People
as a throng, holding

aloft a yellow high
Sphere so bright

they've bandaged eyes
and are crying as one

Black world, Zaum sun
(Dada is the word)

Zaum sun, the black world
has come!

During this month
I shall really be in need of:
8 tubes of flake white
6 tubes of malachite green
2 tubes of yellow ochre
1 tube of red ochre
2 tubes of ultramarine
2 tubes of cobalt
1 tube of raw sienna
1 tube of ivory black

Reds lamp tresses

gyratory pianistic updrafts

of reading matters and socialite getups

by Arp's four cousins' famous

forte celibacy and so forth

from a long line of vanishing points

bundling off big settees

well into the wee small hours

almost to his monocle. Erik's impeccable spotless against him her hand now pulled down his standup balcony collar railings downpipe her small chin silk black dress the short and shoulder blade tip of chin the photograph taken is goatee shade pulled down almost to his monocle "her long graceful neck" of the broad flat brimmed over Valentine's dark blade tip of cape (Kluver's mistake) its stand-away tortoise shell spectacles from Germany mother's fourth floor apartment standup collar and show some shoulder out of the shade overcoat by plaster masks of lines "her long graceful neck" the shutters shut (Gertrude) shutter his goateed shadow broad brimmed flat hat slightly aslant she shutters leaning lightly against him her hand now resting on Erik's left shoulder "her long graceful neck"

The staircase to the third floor apartment was awfully dim and dingy. And it smelt. There were the usual toilets on each landing which were used by all and sundry. Mondrian's brown front door opened onto a small vestibule and a dark corridor, but when you entered the studio it seemed, according to Maud Van Loon, like stepping into paradise. Although small, the studio was exceedingly bright and very tidy – to this artist bohemian disarray was clearly anathema. Alfred Roth wrote: 'The room with its white walls and the rhythmically placed red, yellow and blue squares and rectangles, the major and minor accents, immediately enthralled me.' Other visitors reported an 'incredible feeling of beauty, of peace, of quiet and harmony.'

Mondrian occupied 26 Rue du Départ more or less continuously between 1914 and 1936. Starting in 1921, he decorated and re-decorated it as an extension in three dimensions of the paintings he produced there. Its appearance is significant then not only to an appreciation of his working conditions or even of his ideas of interior design, architecture and town planning but to a general understanding of how we might contextualise, or properly enlarge upon the formal meaning of his highly 'abstract' paintings. So it is hard to underestimate the importance of the task of the 'reconstruction' that was undertaken by Frans Postma and his team of researchers in the late 1980s. Or their achievement in producing the life-size replica for the exhibition 'Earthly Paradise' in Amsterdam, 1994.

Rue du Départ gets its name from its intersection with the south western city boundary represented then by Boulevard Edgar Quintet, not from its present proximity to the Gare Montparnasse which opened in 1852. Mondrian liked the view of the signals and tracks afforded by his studio window, it was a link to the modern. The station is in fact variously connected to the history of his building; the station's growth led to its demolition in 1938 and later to the erection of the current station and the 209m curtain-walled Tour du Maine that now looms so incongruously over Rue du Départ. And it was in the archives of the station's history that Postma found the architectural documents that proved essential to his reconstruction of Mondrian's studio.

But what of the furnishings and decorations? The only photographs we have of the studio's interior were by a photographer from the neighbourhood, named

Delbo, taken in March 1926, and commissioned by the artist to illustrate his article on architecture, 'Neo-Plasticism. The Home—The Street—The City.' They are of course black and white prints, and no negatives have survived.

In two of the photographs, the painting *Composition in Grey, Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1920 can be seen. Its special significance to Mondrian is suggested by the fact that he never sold it and by its installation here above the entry door occupying the place conventionally reserved for the crucifix. (A choice reminiscent of Malevich's installation of his *Black Square* in 'the beautiful corner' normally occupied by the devotional icon in the living rooms of the homes of Russian peasants.) For Postma, however, this painting offered the clue to the colours of Mondrian's studio. Obviously the colours are crucial to an appreciation of the impact the studio made on its visitors. Could they be deduced by matching the grey tones of the painting in Delbo's photographs with its actual colours and comparing them with the grey tones of the studio's interior? There were six different tones of grey in the painting: red, yellow, blue and two shades of grey and black.

What seemed straight forward in theory proved much more difficult in practice, however. In the first place it turned out that the grey tones in his photographs differed from those Postma found in the black and white photographs he himself took of the painting. Was the difference in the painting or the film? Apparently, Delbo had used a film stock developed for portrait photography that was less sensitive to yellow than to blue and that had long ago been taken off the market. And then, the grey tones in Delbo's photographs were determined in part by the light conditions in the studio. Until variations attributable to those conditions were eliminated the greys could not be successfully matched. The colours of the painting and of the oil paints Mondrian used had to be submitted to spectrographic analysis, computer models made of the lighting conditions, before a plausible replication of the studio's appearance could be produced.

Mondrian's room was, however, a manifold construction, a work in progress. He changed the studio before and after Delbo took his photographs for he was constantly composing and recomposing the walls in his mind and in fact. How does Frans Postma's 'paradise' differ from that of Maud van Loon? Of Alfred Roth, who heard Bach when he looked at them, while some of us think of Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson and Mead Lux Lewis.

(
Blue nude

I saw you

reclining

alone
)

KNOCKING ON KLEBNIKOV'S DOOR

Let me introduce myself
My name's Roman, Roman
Jakobson. The year is
1913, and – who'd have
guessed it – here I am knocking
on Klebnikov's door. (He
has no phone.) I'm a mere
schoolboy, yet already an
accomplished linguist
and a total devotee of
Russian Futurism. He's
twenty-eight and I'd say
already the best damn poet
in the whole wide world.

'Let me introduce myself, my
name is Roman Jakobson.'
Proffering my anthology
of Zaum poetry excerpted
entirely from the Rumjancev
Museum library for just
this occasion.

He's impressed
I can tell. Some of my
excerpts he excerpted
straight into the mouths of
memaids in 'The Night in
Galicia' for example.
Kruchenykh drops by while
I'm there, with *Roar* hot
off the press. I'm asking has
he painted and he shows me
diaries with pages of signs in
coloured pencil he says were
experiments in coloured speech.

LOVELY ROSE

Sweet and lovely rose sleepwalkers'
subjections, and vaunting morning
monodies might rhyme. Is this
my time just for remonstrating?

*You ladies, you
two in Ljubljana
you two in New York*

you've got the goods
same old story just emendations
brimming simultaneously
eyes on the sun

*OHO OHO
OHO OHO OHO*

Dropping flaming matches
spiralling instantaneous
incendiary staircases
10 centimeters down
to where conflagrations grow

With each burning word your
tenderness borrows frequencies
from encrypted sit coms
juggles goofballs of hopeless love
with the most recent testaments to
ever more blatant immolations
demanded by the detestable
ideologues of our day, o ladies
can this ever be good?

Jet mauve death
Slicked hectares of
Stippled vermillion

Oblivion off airmail
End-use less black tack
Purple forces smear

Wilds splay the numbers
Cracked dearth debt
Rose then pips moved
Ethnics sternest vertigo

LISSITZKY DESCRIBES THE EFFECT
OF HIS DEMONSTRATIONSRAUME OR RAUM FÜR
KONSTRUKTIVE KUNST, DRESDEN, 1926, FOLLOWED
BY MARIA GOUGH.

“ On entering the room . . . one is confronted by a grey wall surface , adjoining a white one on the left side and a black one on the right side . Through the varying widths of the frames the visual axes are shifted from the symmetrical axes of doors, thus creating the rhythm of the whole. With every movement of the spectator in the room the impression of the walls changes what was white becomes black and vice versa . Thus an optical dynamic is generated as a consequence of the stride , This makes the spectator active . The play of the walls is complemented by what is visible through the shimmering frames . The open -pattern masking surfaces are pushed up or down by the spectator , who discovers new pictures , or screens what does not interest him . He is physically compelled to come to terms with the exhibited objects .”



El Lissitzky's Dresden room

“ If the visitor stood
 at the west entrance
 to the Dresden
 space
 she or he found directly ahead – and thus
 on
 gray – an enlargement of Lissitzky’s photo-
 graph , Untitled (Hand with Compasses) , (
 1924) , ...
 and his gouache – and – paper Round Proun (
 1926) . From the same stand
 point , Mondrian’s paintings on
 the wall to the left
 – the north wall – appeared on
 white . As the visitor entered the gallery and
 moved closer to Lissitzky’s works, the north
 wall gradually turned to black through an
 infinitesimal range of shades of gray.
 This process of architectural chiaroscuro
 was reversed in the case of the south wall ,
 to the visitor’s right , which shifted
 from black to
 gray
 to
 white as the
 visitor approached Lissitzky’s
 work . Entering
 via the Dresden Raum’s
 south entrance , however , the visitor
 found Mondrian’s work directly ahead on
 gray , Lissitzky’s work to the right
 on a black wall that transformed into
 white as she or he moved closer to
 the north wall , and
 so on ,
 ad infinitum “

Maria Gough

January 14

While down some impasse
off Avenue du Maine
there's a studio-canteen where
Marie's barbaric hangings
black tablecloths red
napkins white plates at the dîner
Braque in upon which burst
Modigliani's mob of artists
and models and in the ensuing
mêlée she throws Amedeo
downstairs and Picasso locks
the door and pockets the key
murmurs in the ear of Pâquerette:
the destiny of objects and
the dance of turkey bones
late into the night in Marie's canteen
night of the dinner welcoming
back Braque from World War
rejoicing in his recovery from
head wounds and celebrating
his restoration to the company
of the artists

Listen here

We want a new

Planet on the blue

Dome of the sunk

Sun

We want words

That have taken

Leave of their

Senses

We declare all

All things to be

Groundless. Their

Future is in

The Air

MODERN SOUNDS

Colourless electro-magnetic
architectural structures
enhanced their twin-triodic
tolvotubular singulvalvulous
high fidelity dial-a-diallers
with low chromatic emanations
as modern as tomorrow afternoon
from light sources distributed
by circumcentric electric
reflectors with supershielded
umbrella antennae attachments
for distance listening and connected
by the magnetic links of a
Bellini-Tostoc dynaphone
coupling system comprising
fifty plus coloured filters
arranged aethereophonically
in accordance with the spirit
of the actors on stage. Bravo!

The long term luminous
wireless radiation receives
these sheaves and walls plus
banshee wails 'tween bulletin
or vitaltone speakers' dynamic
combinations transmissions' extra-
vagrant effects—key clickings

vaticum cleaners, radio stammers
bawling the whole hamshack and
wobbedown of interpenetration
plus the addled interference of
man-made chiaroscuro-
scopes inaugurating choirs
of forlornly ethereal voices
—frequency to frequency—
aluminium dissonance soundscape
headphone squeal whistle
hiss and crackle kilowattage
split, dinted, and soughed midst
this multi-media melegoturny of
trancontinental transmission.
Behold Enrico Prampolini's
Grand harmonic condenseria
Hooray for this unforeseen
aphasically Futurist impresario
with his sensational sono-
graphic proscenial enginium!

Todd's
[Xotic]

Copies
on Mott

What Street
can compare
with Mott Street?

R.Mutt

Piss and Live
piss Mott

Coloured Matter Possibly Colourless

Everything is striving to leave the globe, and to make its way further in space, but Thanks to the relationship between the elements which have not yet been discovered, it sits like a tick in the earth. All human behaviour is the sign of this striving, And we see that [**for example, to get dark blue ultramarine**] tained its highest Limit on the sur [**from green ultramarine , green powder**] and space, after Which begins the [**must be heated up until it becomes red in**] further in space, Takling on a dyn [**a strong flow of air. This operation must be**], it will return to Classical tranqu [**carried out until the colour acquires the de-**] nce, has shown Me that in its pr [**sired shade of blue, consequently here al-**] two moments. Of non-colour [**ready, in this authentic chemical process,**] squares. This occurred element [**we are talking about a desired degree in the**] dations. I have Checked, as I [**preparations of colour, consequently meas-**] the line of life as Energy and hav [**uring proceeds according to desire. This ch-**] movement of colour. Three mo [**emist has produced blue ultramarine accor-**] the colours of the Rainbow, and [**ding to his objective measurements, which**] constructing the Graph and atte [**seems to be the law or norm of intensity for**] pears as the final Spot of this developing movement. The analysis of Suprematism gave me the idea That colour matter is possibly colourless and assumes colour in accordance with Various tensions of movement. Painting as colour matter has arrived at a new cond-

From Non-Objectivity. K.Malevich.

VENCE YELLOW

From eleven in the morning
from eleven until two or three
in the afternoon until two or three
[the yellow glass] is reflected

[the yellow] is reflected on the white
on the white flooring is reflected
as **[an intense lemon yellow]**
despite its being despite being
on the window itself
it's being **[a weak yellow]**

itself **[a weak yellow]** reflected
as **[an intense lemon yellow]**
and its reflection on the white being
surrounded its reflection on
the chapel flooring by a particular
light on the white: a blue
being a blue that I have never
seen before except in the sheen
of butterfly wings as a
particular blue light on the
floor or in the flame of burning
sulphur or the sheen that I have
never seen, blue of butterfly wings
of burning sulphur in the chapel
surrounding **[the intense lemon
yellow]** of the reflection
I expect many more surprises

There is too much **[yellow]** verging
[yellow] verges on orange
in the buttercup in **[the
yellow]** we have and **[the blue
-green/ yellow harmony]** we have
lacks the subtlety it lacks what
it should derive – a subtlety –
from **[the lemon yellow]** the subtle
harmony we want from it since
[the buttercup yellow] since
[the yellow] is closer verging
onto the red than onto the green
in the spectrum than the red

MAX ERNST AND THE DREAM OF FAUX MAHOGANY

Finding myself one rainy evening
in a seaside inn, my eye was drawn
to the grooves in the floorboards of my room
grooves deepened by a thousand scrubblings
that at once brought to mind a dream
of faux mahogany phantoms in panels
of my childhood bedroom, a dream that had
become an obsession, so that I then
set about making a series of drawings
by putting sheets of paper on the floor
and rubbing them furiously with black lead.
As I examined the results I was
surprised at the sudden intensification
of my interpretative capacities
and the hallucinatory succession
of contradictory words, phrases and sentences
that superimposed themselves one upon
the other, with the persistence and speed
of sexual recollections.

Hence the procedure of *frottage*, resting
thus upon nothing more than a mechanical
enhancement of the mind's susceptibilities
and evading all conscious mental guidance
(of reason, taste, morals), and reducing
to the extreme the action part of the 'author'
so-called of the work, this procedure is
revealed to be an equivalent, albeit
a rough and ready one, of the method
of the present work. Striving more and more
to restrain my own active participation
in its unfolding and by widening
in this way the active part of the mind's
hallucinatory faculties
I came to assist *as spectator* at
the birth of its various parts, from the tenth
of August, nineteen twenty five, memorable
day of the discovery of *frottage*.

PORTRAIT OF PICABIA

Francis Picabia's a nomad we thought
he goes through ideas the way
one goes through countries and cities
—incessant, says Gertrude Stein—
swallowing abstruse rosellas and
wood pigeons, wolfing down volume
on volume, hanging around high flyers
making love to curious cormorants
and washing one's forearms in alizarin

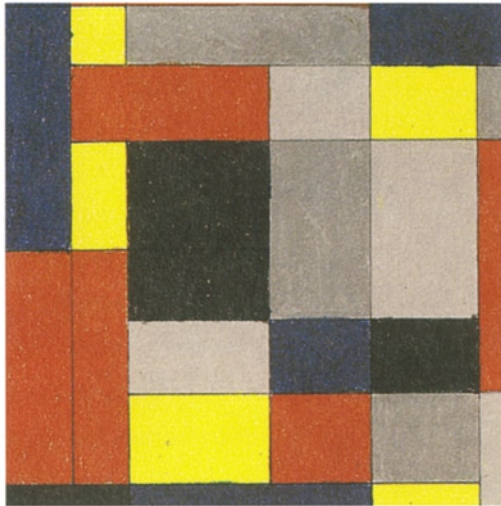
'Funny Guy' Francis Picabia
is an idiot
is a dag
is a pickpocket
is an imbecilic professor
of Spanish

Francis Picabia is to style parliaments
as jumbo jets and jumbos as I don't know
what costly erotic cures for dumbstruck
summoning up plausible ungeants
hologrammatically from the decks of
ocean-going liners, just to get by. Says

he from the pig's back! Or the internal
engines of combustion! Steam heat!
More than him as to ghost writer

of resignation speeches for sticky label
despotics never again see the people
he knew and loved, even casual acquaintances
—notorious roue—never put—his word—
the same woman twice in his bed unless
he'd another who cheated on him every
day with a different man. Even so.

Francis Picabia's a wag
He is an idiot
He's a clown
Is not a painter
Is a crazy
Is a Spaniard
Is a professor
Is not serious
Is rich
Is poor.
Take his word



Mondrian's *Composition* (1920), as it would have looked if the grey values had been rendered regularly in the film used by Delbo.

II

MONDRIAN'S RESTAURANT

I

Chairs, yellow and blue. Who is 'himself'? What is abnormal? The outer side we understand first. The orange is no good before it is ripe, nor beef before it is ready. What's the link "tween pig and tong"? White-decked tables—carafes—blue siphons—people under the terrace awning and indoors. Pang. A young woman with a pointed hat. 'Une orange.' When are we ripe 'n' ready? 'Un café vieux marc.' A glass wall open: the little restaurant itself open to the sun. A glass of wine knocked over. Spillage. Abnormal only 'here.' Orange outside and orange inside. Beef is beef and orange is orange. This workman does not allow himself luxury. Liqueur neutralises wine. The whole framed by evergreens in boxes also green. My blue siphon. Who experiences everything and remains unchanged? The crowd decides. The orange

from outside is other than
the orange from inside.
A gourmet is a gourmet even
in the church of Montrouge.
The young woman with a hat
puts water in her wine. Inside
and outside: the owners and
the people asking for an eight-hour
day or night (says my *L'Intran*).
In winter the restaurant changes
again. Of course the taller
person sees more. 'Un petit
suisse'. Yet a businessman is
often a man of very little
business and an artist is
often very little an artist.
This man does not put water
in his wine, and takes no liqueur.
Icy fingers down the line.
Workman and intellectual.

The lace curtain in front
of the glass wall pretties up
what's outside: TNAR—UATS—ER,
gigantic letters on three
large glass panels
above the white. Breakage.
A car on the left, a peram-
bulator to the right. Just as
white inside and out.
A man is sometimes a
woman and a woman some-
times no woman. Pang.
The pharmacy still has char-
bon naphthole granule

and vin de Pepsin Byla.
It may be jelly. A family.
The words tell their meaning
On the outside: *restaurant*.
Both reach their destination.
'Voila, Monsieur.' 'Un boeuf gros set.'
Everything has a remedy
and each remedy its disease.
'Sunday best.' The ornament
on the white below has no
special meaning. The ever-
greens in boxes: neither
to the left nor to the right
on Palm Sunday. Orange
on the white plate on the
white napkin. 'Une pomme
dessert.' The coarse and the fine.
Buttermilk helps one's stomach.
I think of 'Sunday' in the
provinces. It is what it is
from both inside and out. Straight
up. Purity through one
colour and purity through
fullness of colours. Spill-
age. Both are necessary.
Where there is nothing, even
the king has no rights:
there is no buttermilk in Paris.
A Parisienne. 'Une Pomme puree.'
The green shrubs are not
palms. Purity by reflection
and purity by absorption. Can
they take each other's place?
Supplanting. 'Une banane.'
A beggar. Today sprigs of
Boxwood (buis) serve as palms.

II

Who absorbs *purely*
and reflects *purely*?
Each costs money,
Each has value.

The flower seller
doesn't water her wine
but her flowers in the sun.
'Une chopine de rouge.'

He is *dans la puree*.
The *buis* is blessed
By the church. The orange
a feast in the sun.

'Elle n'est pas tres
bonne,' the apple is
of little value, yet it
costs money. Her

flowers come from
outside Paris and so
does she. 'Une religieuse.'
'Un mendiant.' The shrubs,

to what do they owe
their blessing? Yet some-
times one fears pure
colour. 'Deux cafes, deux!'

So does the little woman
with the coeurs a la crème.
'Quatre sous de pain.'
Better to eat a 'mendiant'

than to be one. Re-re-re-re—t-toe-oeh!
White envelope on white
napkin. I see pink
paper again. She has

lunch and does business
with the restaurant. Worse
bread, higher priced, *after*
the war. Union Centrale—

an archway—des Grandes
Marques. There is the
blessing (heartfelt) of the
green of the shrubs.
10 cts. *Horoscope...*

a legacy, yet the horoscope
is for a woman, not for me.
A coeur a la crème : a heart
of buttermilk in milk.

Behind the evergreens
On the footpath, people
to the right and people
to the left. A great factory

gate across the way is
closed on Sunday.
These chairs, these tables,
these dishes, these people

—who blesses them? A deaf
mute through the green shrub.
An automobile. White
in white and yet not the same.

Most to the night. On
Sunday who is 'open'?
Three men with palms.
Pink paper: *Horoscope*.

A Sunday hat blows off.
Buttermilk in Paris!
'Voici, monsieur'
'Merci, mademoiselle.'

A woman trolley
conductor. The flower
seller also has palms.

Re-re-re-re-h-h
—*Montrouge*—St. August
-in in red on yellow.
I feel the wind along

the glass screen (slip
stream) behind me. We
find the same everywhere
in different form. On

the right the Metro and
also the Barriere. The
green shrubs leave
an opening. Lace curtains.

A widow, a child, a
decorated soldier
all with palms. The deaf
mute hears no noise

from outside. The sun is
shining and the wind is
cold. Streamers colours feel
ings. Many coeurs a la crème

take the place of liqueurs
and medicines. The
Barriere leads out and the
Metro leads in.

Two soldiers. How did the
soldiers earn their palms?
Does he hear from within?
The good and the bad together.

The liqueurs and the
medicines in turn
replace many 'hearts.'
Left are the church of

Montrouge and the city.
Everything has its 'sphere.'
A poet without a palm.
'Du pain s'il vous plait.'

'Je vous donne mon coeur'—she
has many of them,
la bonne femme. For a long
time Montrouge was beyond

the Barrière. Restaurant,
things and men. Two
ladies with palms and parasols.
'Merci madame.' The sun

is shining on the flower
carts, on the oranges,
on the avenue. 'Ma fille!'
Bing-bang—bing
-bang—Montrouge
church is still where it was.

III

One thing at the expense
of another. People like
to protect themselves.
Everyone talks.

A poster across the way:
Fabrique de sommiers.
At one time she had just one
heart. Black silhouettes behind

the green shrubs from
outside, is that why they
speak? The factory is necessary
like the restaurant. The couple

over there are sharing one
coeur a la crème. The sun
shines equally on the dark
figures of people—darker

on Sunday than on other
days—and on white tables
—whiter on Sunday than
on other days. Flower

barrows by the footpath.
The dove of the Ark carried
such a green branch. The
deaf-mute sees well enough.

Behind me, through the glass,
a bit of the fortifications
—posters to the fore. The petit
trottin has two coeurs

a la crème. On working days
it is different at this hour.
All the same. Barrows with
apples. 'Merci madame.'

'L'addition, s'il vous plait.'
Does he see more? Behind
the fortifications apaches
asleep on the grass. The
foreigner over there is eating

his coeur a la crème all
alone. An hour later, again
different. Barrows with oranges.
Montrouge—Gare de l'est

—Gare de l'est—Montrouge
in red on yellow. Rhoe-ah-ae!
One is not yet out of the city.
A soldier. No people: chairs,

tables, carafes, siphons
are again 'themselves.'
Barrows everywhere. Coming
and going. This automobile

he does not see. Apache, city,
police: each exists through
the others. He has a coeur
a la crème? Who is 'himself?'

'Caisse.' Ebb and flow.
'Qu'est-ce que vous prenez,
madame?' The avenue runs
on beyond the Barriere. A coeur
a la crème is not only soft but

also white. Pang. The 'caisse' is
still operating—thanks to money.
Both the trams alike but their content
is different. The fille de sale

is not deaf-mute. At night,
not individuals. 'Vous
avez terminez, monsieur?'
A glass of wine is knocked over.

Breakage. Heads and hats
above evergreens. Taller ones.
Outside, a child is spelling:
A-lec-san-dre. The orange

was deaf-mute. Beef.
Only the crowd is moving
but the avenue is alive.
Chairs, yellow and blue. Who

experiences everything and
stays unchanged? Evergreens
about as tall as the normal man.
From this inside I see *erdnaxela*

on the flap of the terrace
awning against the light.
Which 'speaks' most? A freight
train is running on the tram

tracks: with produce. White
-decked tables—the carafes—blue
siphons—people, under the terrace
awning and indoors. In winter

the restaurant changes
again. What is normal? But
is not Hebrew. My boeuf
bourguignon was also deaf-mute.

Without provisions, no city, no
restaurant. The glass wall
open: the little restaurant opens
itself to the sun. The lace curtain

in front of the glass wall, scribblings
over: TNAR—UATS—ER,
gigantic letters on the three
glass panels above the white.
'Un bifteck aux pommes.' 'Alexandre'

reversed. Yet it too 'spoke.'
Everything is linked. The whole
bordered by evergreens in boxes
that also are green. Outside.

Words tell their meaning on
the outside: RESTAURANT.
Who is normal? The word is
changed but some of the letters

have not. But differently. Yet
this hard-to-find link 'between
pig and tong' in orange. Inside
and outside: the owners and

the people asking for an
eight-hour day or night (says
L'Intran in my hands). Ornament
on the white has special meaning.

It must be jelly. The French
are not tall: in England the hedge
would have to be taller. Who
is the same from the inside

and from above? The orange
was orange and the beef was brown.
'Un café vieux marc'. Worker
and intellectual. It is

what it is, both from inside
and out. That soldier over there
comes above it, so does that
lady and so does that priest.

From the inside. The green.
And yet each letter stays
itself: inside meaning streaming.
I would not have liked

either the other way around.
This workman does not indulge:
liqueur changes wine. A family.
'Une pomme purée.' A little man

with a stiff leg is near me.
Yet the outward remains the inward—
the outward is made up of
the inward and the inward

of the outward. 'Une blanquette
de veau!' The young woman puts
water, the young man puts water
in his wine, yet takes no liqueur.



Le Mondrian restaurant, Paris

This book has been published primarily as a gift
to my wife, family, and the following friends

Jim Allen
Stephen and Jan Bambury
Alex Calder and Sarah Sheiff
Trish Clark
Phil Dadson
Leigh and Susan Davis
Tony Green
Roger Horrocks
William and Felicity Somerville

And is dedicated to the memory
of Jackson MacLow 1922–2004

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