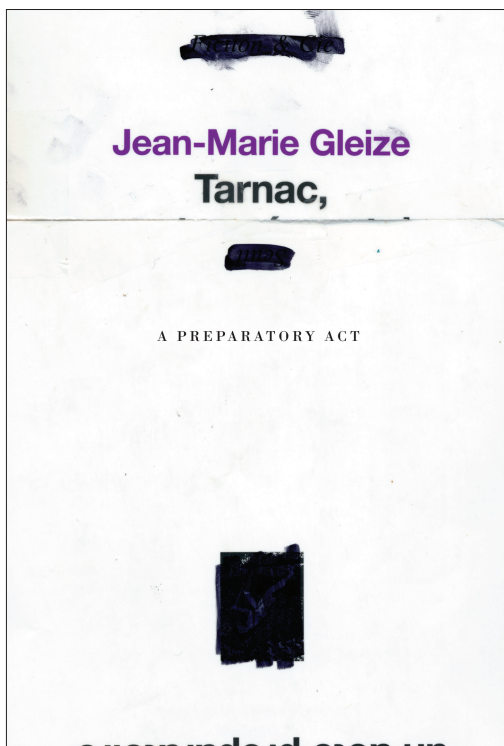


Can we situate an act of political autonomy in/as the provisional autonomy (surfaces) of a poem? // *Tarnac, a Preparatory Act* riffs on/around a 2008 case against Julien Coupat, alleged leader of the Tarnac Nine, a putative “anarchist” cell, who was accused of “criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist act.” // Jean-Marie Gleize considers the implication of an arrest for something “preparatory,” that is, something like speech. // Can a poem (a preliminary act) be insurrectionary? // Poem as “black positive” as in a photograph of a dark surface. // Flashback: 17-year-old martyr of Paris ’68, Gilles Tautin, running from the police, drowning in the Seine, his comrade grabbing his clothes but “the fabric tears ... he is carried off.” // “Meanwhile the image covers the image until it becomes a deviated dialect writing.” // Flashback: Mallarmé at the tomb of Anatole. // Scraps of documentary, overlaid surfaces, sewn fragments, torn again. // “The noise of [walking on] water.” // Out of night terrors, day terrorizes. // “The question of revolution is from now on a musical question.” // A poem as real as the ache of St. Francis. // The fabric tears. —Charles Bernstein



Jean-Marie Gleize was born in Paris in 1946. He was thus of an age to be a Maoist and militant in 1968, identifications he retains to this day. He published his first book (on Francis Ponge) in 1981, and became a professor at l’Université d’Aix-en-Provence as well as at the prestigious l’École normale supérieure de Lyon where he would direct the Centre d’études poétiques from 1999-2009. In addition to his scholarly work on modern and contemporary French, Arabic, and American poetry, he would enter the first rank of French poets (or “post-poets,” as is sometimes said), aesthetically affiliated with peers such as Emmanuel Hocquard, Anne-Marie Albiach, and Claude Royet-Journoud. Gleize has published over twenty books in France.

Published in 2011 by Editions du Seuil, *Tarnac, un acte préparatoire* interrogates in poetic form the fallout from and precedent for the notorious cause célèbre of the “Tarnac Nine”—associated with the Invisible Committee, pseudonymous authors of *The Coming Insurrection*. It is his Anglo-American debut full-length, though as editor of the journal *Nioques*, he is well-known to American readers for, among other things, importing to France the work of some more daring poets from the U.S. In translation, *Tarnac, a preparatory act* not only lends insight into radical aesthetic politics that characterize ongoing transatlantic—indeed global—intellectual affinities, but it introduces to American readers an inestimably important figure of French letters. A book such as this is long overdue and perfectly timely at the same time.



***Tarnac, a preparatory act*, by Jean-Marie Gleize**

Edited and translated by Joshua Clover, with Abigail Lang and Bonnie Roy. Published by Kenning Editions, Chicago, USA.

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TARNAC,
A PREPARATORY ACT

Jean-Marie Gleize

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*For Julien Coupat and his
comrades*

Life comes straight down. Bare matter.
One is inside, it's the strict whirlwind, eternity.

Leslie Kaplan, *L'Excès-l'usine*

I'm not pressed, I don't choke myself,
I'm not crushed, I'm not buried,
I'm not surrounded, I'm not
crushed, I breathe

Christophe Tarkos

1. "TARNAC"

Tarnac flows through me like dust. Of the forest I first found three dark gray photos, very gray, steeped in fog. They will have to figure in the book, they will have to figure the invisible, the formless and blinding mass, what the child sees, what penetrates him without his knowing it.

Some days afterward I found a fourth, belonging to the same series, darker than the others, nocturnal forest, stormy, impenetrable. They will have to be shown quite early in the text, as a warning.

You were asking me how to photograph the night.

You ask me still what “to gaze at absolutely” or to gaze at “to the point of the extinction of the gaze” means.

Immobile here between courtyard and garden, I continue to see. The wall is white, it holds me (I mean that the angle it forms with the table is like the fold of a sheet, and I stay for hours contemplating this calm bed, this bend where nothing moves).

...*watching absolutely*, with an inner, open laughter, the childhood-landscape

...to the point of pain in the eyes, to the point of trembling hands

Something then, from room to room, before and beneath the terraces, among the trees, among the furniture, on the stone steps of the staircase, in the hallway, something then, words, some pages—I was no doubt reading, or I must have been sleeping and I was dreaming this book and these words of the book and the noise they must have made at the moment of bursting, a grenade sound, or this intense and rapid light, a bolt of lightning, something like a *preparatory act*—

a preparatory act...

successive laws has constructed a system
of emergency powers which renews the *lois scélérates*

the charge of “criminal conspiracy
to commit a terrorist act”

it takes only two people to constitute a
“terrorist group” and it takes only a *preparatory*

act for the infraction to be so defined.

This preparatory act is not specified

relation—even tenuous or remote, even
love or friendship—with any of the

opposed to common law which criminalizes the *acts*,
the antiterrorist approach

implicated in a terrorist activity without having to
establish a link between this activity and

books to become an incriminating factor, because they
are said to constitute evidence of opinions;

terrorist for the police to receive
investigative powers: search-warrant

48 hours in common law to 96 hours, even 144 in
antiterrorist proceedings. The

awaiting potential trial the presumed innocent might
spend as many as four years

with the intelligence service. Juryless Assize Courts
were equally to be

parallel system is thus empowered with examining magistrates,
prosecutors, judges

that antiterrorism is now a technique of government, a
mode for managing populations.

contaminates the common law: the antiterrorist
legislation served as a model

generalizing the notion of the “organized gang,” expanding the
powers of the investigative bureaus.

*It would be illusory to demand that this procedural regime be applied in
matters less broad or less brutal: it is designed to be
applied precisely as it is.*

**AN ASSOCIATION WHEREIN THE FREE DEVELOPMENT
OF EACH IS THE CONDITION FOR THE FREE
DEVELOPMENT OF ALL**

Letting thus the time accelerate:

1950195119521953195419551956195719581959196819691
97019711972197319751976198519861987199219931994200
02001200620072009

To fall in holes, to butt against tufts,
to push oneself in,

here the earth is damp. To speak of the thickness of hedgerows. To say
that the forest is “closed.” A vast and covered hall. Sheet metal roofs. Walls
collapsed in places. A shed.

2. ELEVEN NOVEMBER 2008

That night the wind was blowing above the ferns. The sky had fallen like a metal shutter.

The scene was almost invisible and mute. One could hear footsteps.

*

... knocking over, bit by bit, all the obstacles

... making each sentence into a fire stand

“the folly of an order”

On eleven November at 5 a.m. the police cross Toy-Viam with dogs.
The five access roads to the village of Tarnac are blocked.
The village is sealed.
A helicopter surveys the zone.

150 policemen
60 from the *sdat* (sous-direction de l’antiterrorisme)
50 from the *dcri* (direction centrale du renseignement intérieur)
40 from the police judiciaire in Limoges

The house searches begin.
They find
neither weapons, nor explosives, nor incendiary bombs, nor steel reinforcement bars, nor metal hooks.

Stretches of ferns, hedges of ferns, banks and beds of ferns.

A mask with fixed eyes gulps down the head of a bird.

Three men and two women are arrested, placed under police custody and transferred to Levallois.
One of them is imprisoned Charged with Indicted for

no evidence
no material evidence fact or proof
no implement

for criminal conspiracy for in relation
with relation
in the forest
(someone will answer that there is only continual forest, night and rain, music)
or terrorist
of terror under high trees under wood under cover

one or several cabins and electrical sabotage a
terrorist enterprise
He will be remanded into custody.
Remanded
far from the river.
After his [three three three] demands to be released are rejected

in February the fourth month
in April the sixth month
but with no police record

degradations degradations

no material evidence no implement

no dna trace no blood no saliva

no trace nor prints

of ferns.

Thousands

3. THE HISTORY OF DUST

It is seven years old, the normal age.

At the end of the room as if down in the hold. Curled up arms naked.
Turned under the curtains, the drapes.

“You are not in the place, it’s the place that is in you.”

Down the corridors, that’s it.

Eyes closed, pressed, yes.

Tarnac, 1953, it is seven years old, the normal age, eyes
lost, tamped under the drapes, the rigging, the detestation.

He thinks he would like to vomit.

Especially the history of the rain, something still under the stones, and the
noise of the water, when he closes his eyes he sees the noise of water, the
words of the book mingling with the noise of water, drops and drops, a
sound of praying or psalm, a sound of vegetable dust.

Heather, yes, faded, rough. Dug up sides, absolutely black sides.

What I mean is he is learning to read with eyes closed, yes.

A few words, very few. Leaning over a book. A few words first in pencil then heightened in ink, everyday, on a schoolboy's notebook, Caravelle, Ouragan, Hermès, Corvette, Héraklès, grey, green and blue, spirals, from September 28, 1952 to December 4, 1958,

On April 16, 1964, he dies.

.....
.....

From his “spiritual testament” as “unworthy son” of Saint Francis:

1° that my remains be confined in a whitewood coffin, and buried in the cemetery of my parish under the trees

2° that no emblem of mourning be placed either at my home, or at the church, whether outside or even at the altar where the holy sacrifice will be celebrated.

Thus begins the history of dust over and again.

Someone says there is only the forest, (continuous rain, continual. A single note, continuous.)

- The tree-tops are won over by night. No color is left.
- The forest is closed. It's as if it were closed.

- You remember with closed eyes, lips sewn, at the end of the room, turned and tamped under the sheets, under the drapes, chasing the beasts away, busy with the noise of the river.

- All around?

Yes, night fallen between the branches. Now the forest is closed

(and now and forever the forest is closed, covered).

The rain will continue for several hours, several days and several nights. It continues for a while, a long while. It cannot erase the dust.

That April 1964 he is not in Tarnac. He will not see the body. He has often seen this one reading and writing at the corner of the terrace in the garden's cloister, he doesn't know he's dead.

Later he will find the XXIV meditation notebooks.

*

history of dust

Some villages are very far from mass. The first one, when there are two, is said very early in the winter. One must wake up before dawn. Arrive covered in snow and damp to the skin.

For a long time one will have to carry the dead. Eyes closed. Following the slope. Held up by the wind.

The habit of carrying the bodies from a great distance and along steep paths is fatal to some of the bearers. Drenched in sweat, they are exposed to the cold and must stand still a long time in a church built on fountains.

The history of dust is also that of running waters.

The houses, very low, dark, are badly paved or not at all.
The stone in the walls is a sort of clay.

Watching the floor. Heading towards the noise of the water. When there is thunderstorm, the wind lifts the timber frames like the leaves of a book, hurls them down and shatters them.

In a metal box on the edge of the washhouse in the upper part of the village he had found a piece of blotting-paper, roughly cut

And these lines:

Lay two hairs crosswise

Catch the grains of salt in a sack of linen and hide them in a secret place

Dry a layer of turf on a burning bush

Go barefoot.

That same summer, for the “history of dust” project, he had copied out this fragment he had entitled

“description”

*A mask with fixed eyes was gulping into its open
mouth the head of a dove whose extended wings
hang down to the stone*

4. ANARCHY

Anarchy is represented in the figure of a woman whose entire posture, body, eyes, mouth announce fury. Her eyes are blindfolded, her eyelids tremble, her hands are wet, her tufted hair tousled and her clothing torn. She tramples over the book of the law and a bundle of sticks. She brandishes a knife and in the other hand a lit torch. On the ground at her sides lie a cracked scepter, a broken yoke, a prayer rug, a pearl necklace, a silk scarf and foam. Around her there is clotted blood, motor parts, nails, screws and puddles of urine.

Or again in the figure of a serpent that vomits and
slobbers.

5. *STATIC SHOTS*









On this image, he recognized the Bois du Chat

6. "F" DOCUMENTS

As for the author of the notebooks, he wanted to follow the example. Since the summer of 1908 he had been asking to strip himself bare. To live according to the rule. To drink milk and water, to hold in his hand “this dry tree leaf.”

Many in the same family would from now on be named Francis.

This is where he had sought to know the most-poor, to look at unhealed sores.

It is there in the cemetery that his body is decomposing. He had himself buried naked, wrapped in a sheet.

Document “F”, I [the way of poverty]

“his miserable appearance clearly told where he put his treasure”

“let the sign of our community be to never possess anything of its own beneath the sun for the glory of your name, and to have no goods other than alms”

“if we possessed anything we would need weapons to defend ourselves. From ownership are born difficulties and disputes that pose obstacles to the love of the neighbor. This is why we do not want to possess any worldly thing, none”

“if we had goods we would need weapons and laws to protect them. This is why we should possess nothing, nothing at all.”

“for us wood cabins, no shelter other than branches and huts, cabins. We must build cabins”

“if we find money somewhere, let’s treat it like nothing more than the dust upon which we tread”

“we should value and appreciate money no more than we do stones”

“if it happens that one day one of us collects and possesses money, he should be regarded as a thief, as an owner”

“collect stones, love stones, prefer stones, the bed of stones at the bottom of the river”

“love the river”

“for the water itself has been washed, and the fire purified by fire”

.....
.....

“ut sint minores.”

Document “F” II [*biography*]

He threw his clothes to the ground and flung his money on the pile. He went out naked into the forest, walking on the frozen earth between the trees, a man henceforth fatherless. Advancing beneath the branches, he began to sing.

He wanted to see each tree as a distinct thing.

At the end he was told he went blind.

He received the wounds.

He asked that he be placed on the ground. He was as naked as the day he went out in the cold.

This is how his burnt eyes saw the light. The animals had stopped moving.

Document “F,” III [notebooks]

“Tarnac, 10/4/52 =

that matter is an
efficacious sign, water,
oil, bread and wine it's
a whole period of my
life that I recall each
year on your feast day,
beloved, so beloved
francis. The same day
of the month of August
1908, some hours
before learning of the
death of my saintly
mother, I had the great
fortune to be admitted
among your spiritual
sons. My joining as a
postulant dates in fact
to the morning of
August 30, 1908,
*habitum tertii ordinis de
poenitentia*, I asked for
the habit, what do you
ask for? I ask for this
habit *ut a morte*

perpetua nos liberares.

This would be the time
to examine the way I
fulfilled my duties of
the third order.

Everything comes back
to the recitation of the
office of the virgin or
the prayers that
replaced it. Faithful, *ut
in spiritu humilitatis
viam.* But too often the
recitation was
distracted, crossed by
reveries, interrupted,
images, phantoms,
figures, forms, fogs.

This is the abridged
story of a whole life that
wanted to be Christian,
that I forced myself to
want. It was so from
the outside, in practice.
But deep within, so
many struggles, so
many accusations, so
many condemnations! I
come to you today tired
and weighed down, heavy
and weighed down,
blind and naked,
behind you seraphic
and simple francis, so
that, with your so
suppliant and sweet

prayer, so green, you
grant me relief, despite,
despite

Tarnac, 10/4/53 =

objects of meditation
objects are not lacking
today. I hold in my
hand this dry tree leaf.

Let us therefore in
joyous give the force of
love to the most holy,
queen of the m.h.
rosary. I will, October
long, meditate with her
each evening on the
fifteen great mysteries
of our holy religion,
fifteen. A most salutary
pleasing prayer whose
benefits I have already
enjoyed. The service on
the nineteenth Sunday
provides me the
occasion to reflect on
the conditions that
might place us among
the elect called to the
marriage of the son of
the king: to live among
the humble and be
dressed in wedding
garments. To go
barefoot with them.
Finally, the dear
memory of the seraphic

francis will make me as
I should be, poor in
spirit, pure of heart,
childlike in spirit,
passionate love Our
Savior Jesus Christ
christ for having the
good fortune to be
comforted by him when
the cross that he will
ask us to bear seems too
heavy.

Tarnac, 10/4/54 =

I recognize once more,
o lord, how good you
have been to me in
placing on my path a
son of francis, père
gratien, and my mouth,
*et os meum annuntiabit
laudem tuam*, in order
to help me become an
apostle here where you
have placed me. Thanks
to him I have come
better to know and
understand the most-
poor of assisi and be
adopted by his great
family. Have I indeed
followed the rule:
renouncing earthly
goods, listening to the
wind, love of streams
and of god to the point

of having contempt for
myself? I do not know.
My will was total. Will
it forgive me my
failings, faults, gaps?
Happy to be still
walking today, after
forty-six years, in the
footsteps of the dear
minor capuchins, and
to pray with them this
morning, *labia mea*
aperies, united more to
the one among them
who succeeded the
great friend in my
heart, the one thanks to
whom I have become
the gratien brother of
the third order founded
by our seraphic francis.
There you have two
angels as supple as long
birds, there they are.
Tarnac, 10/4/55 =
Let this day be
franciscan in union
with my capuchin
brothers living and
dead, with my brothers
and sisters of the third
order living and dead.
Reading and
meditation on my mass.
Saying with francis "I

cried unto the LORD
with my voice; with my
voice unto the LORD
did I make my
supplication.” And I
rejoice that francis,
humble and poor,
enters heaven wealthy,
celebrated by heavenly
hymns. Then I examine
myself on the following
points of rule:
contempt for the world,
listening to the wind,
love of streams and
rain, spirit of poverty, a
closer and closer
attachment to your
church, o lord, after the
example of our seraphic
father. To not forget
above all that the third
order, founded by him,
is called the “third
order of penitence.” I
will attempt to end my
day with a reading of
one among many
franciscan works at
hand. May god bless
this simple day and this
cabin so that I can take
all that I can from it.
And from the tree.
Tarnac, 10/4/56 = Our

seraphic francis,
borrowing the language
of the jesus you so loved,
I want to say to you
humbly that I give
thanks to you for
having, like him,
thought of these mere
and common mortals,
those desiring to lead a
more Christian life. To
become monks, like you,
would have appealed to
them. To be sure, they
could leave all that and
follow you. But they
cannot consider this due
to a circumstance they
have not chosen and to
which they considered
themselves committed
by the very will of god.
It is then, francis, that
you have shown your
understanding. That you
proposed that they
follow you from a
distance, and took the
trouble to indicate a
mode of conduct
attached to your own in
principle and promised
them participation in
the spiritual advantages
from which benefit the

fully practicing monks
that you have grouped
around yourself, a
stricter rule for a more
perfect life. This is how
your third order was
born, how it lived and
prospered, this order of
which I have been a part
for what will soon be
fifty years. This is what
pleases me today in
giving thanks to you,
glorious francis, by
losing myself in the
crowd of your children
that you never cease to
protect and commend, I
am sure, to this jesus you
have loved enough to
deserve that he renew in
your flesh the sacred
unhealed sores *sacra
stigmata* of his passion.

Tarnac, 10/4/57 =

The church conveys to
francis in the introit of
its mass: “the world is
crucified unto me” by
our lord jesus christ.
That is, it no longer
exists for me, just as I
am myself crucified
through this same jesus
and no longer exist in

the eyes of the world.
For to exist, to be
completely in our lord
jesus christ, is to be a
new creature. Saint paul
said elsewhere:
“therefore if any man
be in OSJC, he is a new
creature: old things are
passed away; behold, all
things are become
new.” This is all I have
managed to understand
well in the famous
passage from paul’s
letter to the galatians.
This moreover fits
francis perfectly as he
no longer existed for
the world from the day
he heard the words
addressed to him by the
christ on the saint
damian cross. This is
also why we wanted to
submit to the rule of
franciscan penitence,
quite moderate gentle,
of the third order,
under the protection of
our late lamented père
gratien. It is therefore
to some extent our feast
that we celebrate today,
since we are your

children, o admirable,
inimitable and seraphic
francis.

Tarnac, 10/4/58 =

On a feast day of saint
francis, only humility
and charity can be
praised before us. Who
was more humble and
loving than he? His
humility led him to
disappear from the
world where, as a young
merchant of assisi he
was admired and
celebrated, enjoying the
respect of all. There
never was and never
will be anyone more
charitable, I mean heart
more open to all the
miseries of this world.
He was so giving that
there was no question
of becoming a
merchant like his
father. He divested
himself therefore of all
his goods, carrying only
the indispensable; he
disappeared from the
bourgeois society of his
native city in order to
establish the bases of
the order that he

wanted to be the
smallest, humblest and
poorest conceivable.
And so, dear and
infinitely gentle francis,
you have gained
numerous disciples; and
so you became the
father of one of the
great families of our
time. Never abandon
the one who once
confided in you,
inspired by the
enthusiasm with which
you one day embraced
the cross of our
common master,
emitte lucem tuam.”

7. TRNC

So what becomes of the image? It comes loose and falls with the wind's quickness. Here, in stormy weather the wind lifted and broke the house frames.

- I knock over the vowels.
- There are two of them, but there is only one, the first one, the only, the black letter, that of beginning, in the water of the sluice or the washhouse, that of the image's center.

TRNC *is the filmed name of this village*. It's built from a sealed fragment (or closed garden), surrounded (or "formless mass").

You wanted to photograph the night. You saw the tree-tops in relief against the sky like saw teeth. You shot at random, threw up your hands toward the hard and cold steel which cut the sky. You thought: "there is nothing between God and us."

That's the sense of these four photographs.

“Aliquid amplius in sylvis invenies”

.....

In the image, it's always cold, and it's here, in the cold, that something can become, or come, something that would come with the wind to cut the words and pages.

There is no photograph of the garden.

A good deal of time will have been given over to the reading of this empty square. The garden, like a cube, opens onto the sky. And as such, is at first, not photographable. The surface of the image, or the image as surface, from any angle, could not present, nor even represent or evoke, the cube, the volume of air inscribed within its edges. Still less point to the cube as the source, as a place (braiding of lines and figuration of time), nor contain the violence of sources, invisible, imperceptible.

There is no photograph of the violence of sources, held within the garden's four edges, the two walls and two terraces, stone and wood, none adapted to the “style of waiting,” lived, interior, incalculable, between the moment of the mind's grasp, confused gesture, blind, and that of the developer bath, where and when, liquid and time unknown. Unfixable.

This chemistry eludes us, and that of the soil's incubation, compression and mixture, that of the ground's factory. Unequal, absorbing the fallen masses of rain.

Some years later, as a caption imposed on this absence of image, I had to try to understand, to reply: "To write I use the ground's accidents."

This sentence, repeated in these terms, commentary imposed on a photograph that doesn't exist.

(so) to write I use the ground's accidents.

Around the garden, the forest. Around the square, including it, surrounding it, the dense population, formless, black and white, of trees. You had asked of me how to photograph the night and I had not understood your question. You wanted to photograph the night as a thing. To fix the night's image. To take the black.

One day, in the streets of Assisi, in September 1991, I found a black Polaroid square lying on the ground. Fragment from the dark part of an image, night, black tossed, refuse, on the ground of Assisi. And so transmitted like a sentence, black ball at the beginning (still black) or like an image that time had not yet revealed, subjected to several years of black rains, dusts and chemical nights, industrial, and I said to you:

The photograph is black but it's not a negative. Black positive. As if a thicket of bare forest had had to be crossed.

All around the four walls, enclosing the garden, formless and deep, moving and resonant, the population of trees.

— I propose to you the river and population of trees, the sentence-image of the sum or vegetal masse, an unphotographable sentence but taut like a flat object, a sort of slate. I trace a word in chalk on the slate gray of the slate. This sentence is friable.

— I see now the gray is forming.

But perhaps he said the gray is closing, that he sees it closing at the heights of the first trees or on the left slope, an oblique and dirty gray like this ancient photograph.

In his account he says that he had tried to photograph the cube and following this had ventured into the forest and that the first image had fallen on the ground and that he had found it covered in a film of dust and mud and that it was illegible “like the forest” and that this was the photograph of a poem, but especially the photograph of a word and that this word was the word image but that nothing was certain because the word had entered the ground, had been swallowed, eaten, destroyed.

Wednesday, 3:00 pm (April 2008)

I begin with this word in the mouth or the name.

is winter is an example tr.

1 of winter 1 of color 1 of temperature.

the words of the book arranged.

retained more before more after: "foxtails and ferns."

this throat story.

but do not precede.

thus description is common.

all know the words one by one.

with that a chair moves.

but the painter sees it.

he also walked on water.

but not an eaten sentence more.

not more chewed.

this sentence still comes forth.

a name then is given.

this name tr from winter + TRNC

But what do the captions signify? The child on one of two terraces. He looks at the wall, and all the images are caught in the garden square. They say nothing but their caption which does nothing but repeat the sound of the surrounding forest, the music of grass and the black of night, that among the trees. He photographs night in their eyes, those of the seated man, the reader, and those of the child. But there is no photograph of the garden. It has concentrated in itself, entered in itself, it has absorbed, reabsorbed. It's nothing but a hole in the middle of the trees. Legendary. Deprived of name.

He believes now that the four photographs correspond to the four letters of the name found to be TRNC, to the four letters of the village's name traced in chalk on the slate gray of the slate, and this name is friable.

At the end there will be nothing but this point without caption. The forest will have continued to grow all around.

No shadow (as in a dream). The paper continues to drink.

8. *INSURRECTION*

*“the sudden awareness of the constant insurrection of
the grass revives us”*

*“the flatness of the meadow having first of all
been said the sudden awakening to the constant
insurrection of the grass revives us”*

A revolutionary movement does not spread by
contamination But by resonance
 Something that constitutes itself here Resonates
with the shock wave given off by something that constituted
itself elsewhere The body that resonates does so in
its own way An insurrection is not like the
propagation of the plague or a forest fire a linear
process spreading little by little from a
spark But rather this It becomes embodied in a
MUSICAL way and whose focal points Dispersed
in
time and space manage To impose the
rhythm of their VIBRATION
 To get ever more dense

to the point where one can no longer desire to turn back

9. REAL TIME

In the last episode of the German soap opera the voice
says that chance corrects chance

I like the vacuity of the images and the way that the
character writes his phone number on a scrap of paper

I also like the name of rivers like the Saône, the
Meuse or the Vienne

but I like the rivers too and not only their names
poetry is often a question of name and chance and
of the pleasure contained in the thickness and the
vacuity of things

it is also quite certainly a way of being with the
rivers and in my case of being the river's

and also of returning along the left bank of the
Vienne some distance from its sources, avoiding the
question of the poem because no, poetry, truly,

no

but something in the tonalities of dark green, and
for instance:

you can get to Tarnac by the Peyrelevade road, then
you will cross the Vienne, take a bridge over the
narrower Berbeyrolle, cross over at La Ganne where
the Servièrre road begins, go through the forest and its
night and its red carpets,

and

you come to the base of the slope

on the square

you are at the foot of the tree or in front of it

*

Tarnac is a village in the forest
the color is the dark gray the cold black of slates and
trees
the very deep cold of the water that rushes down
between the trees there are carpets of dark green
there are gullies and ferns
there are gullies and slopes of heather
there is peat

the ground is cold and un giving
the color of Tarnac is that of the grass's deep cold
that of the deepest cold of water on stones
at the place called l'Écluse
at the place called le Bois du Chat
around the Lagorce bridge on the banks of the Vienne
at the entrance of the washhouse and by the cemetery
or on the Javaud path.

*“The world already possesses the dream of a time whose
consciousness it must now possess in order to live its
reality”*

Later, much later, space dwindles. The box looks like the
inside of a truck. Grim and run down. Wasted. The wall is
now the size of a playing card or a business card

I used to say: the future, the present, here

it was like the name of the river, or the word *sheet* or the
word *gate*

the Vienne, the river, the Vienne

I used to see in its eyes the reflection of the screen

He was reading in silence at the far end of the garden
and I would see the movement of his lips.

The street had no name

I walked toward the washhouse

I opened and closed the gate

I stood before the closet in the sacristy

I looked at the trees and I saw that their leaves were
black

I decided to choose my dialect

: “communist” is

for me this word suspended in water, this body caught
in water.

(follow-up to the standing conference)

I pick up again from the word “communist”
There was also the sentence
“to be unequal is the first solid reality.”

To write I use the accidents of the ground
To be unequal is the first solid reality.

He asked me how to photograph the night.

I answer that I present the river
I present this way of suggesting the river in Tarnac by saying that it is a lyric presentation (or a lyric proposition) not visual but surprised, very dependent on the calculation of intervals and intensities (for example this noise of the water, the unevenness of things on the surface and under the surface). But the river is then invisible and this music is nothing but the noiseless noise of the ferns. The description ends as image-sentence, a sentence unphotographable but taut like a flat object a kind of slate.

I trace a word in chalk on the slate gray of the slate.
The sentence is friable.

10. INNER VOICES, US

**(the conference has stopped, one now hears a voice
about to read a poem)**

I am still standing here and now I read *Inner Voices*. I close my eyes and distinctly see the book and distinctly see a path of dirt and tar potholes the blinding shards of a dream and the word image its large black letters floating above the pages and the words and occupying the whole surface of the screen.

There are these leaning pieces of cardboard.
It's like the head at the top of the cross, leaning,
growing heavier and heavier,
it is devoid of strength and it looks about to fall
but it doesn't fall.

And this passage leads here, outside, and I don't discriminate
between wall and floor, I am you are we are you are in the same
corridor.

Time passes.
to write I use the accidents of the ground, the thicket of time,
We have nothing more than time only time it's our cabin
and "the world already possesses the dream of another time."

I have decided to choose my dialect.

Here is outside and I already own I really live time as I write it by hand in this language on the slate gray of the slate, here.

*

He wanted to count the surfaces.

He photographed the six faces of this corridor, a cube,
a tube
and the street like a river-bed
with the dense walls of trees
and the four pieces of wood or two which are the
crossing of a body
with the head leaning and bound to lean.

All this time he will remain on exhibit
There will be the exhibit of the head and the leaning of the head
and the tearing of the head
a noise inside until in the end he is neither thirsty
nor anything
and he is left alone with the light.

“now the body is alone with the light.”

The photograph fell in the street, it is blown away by the
wind, run over by the wheels of cars, trucks,
creased, crushed, torn, stained
It's covered in a film of dust and mud
It's the photograph of a poem.

Standing at the entrance of the corridor he was looking at the black and white design

The outline of the word *image* its five letters

I=M=A=G=E

The word was copied out, photographed, and now nobody can read it anymore, the square sheet is barely visible on the floor, the photograph disappears in the holes, he disappears, the paper disappears, it is taken away

something is swallowing it again and again.

I've just realized that the noise I hear is only the noise of my blood inside my head.

And it's the cold of an inner voice heard as inner of February drunk like that in a quick gulp.

I begin with this dream account which is the dream of the road of dirt and tar .

I tell you, how
and you tell me it's impossible.

But there is the noise of the explosion and the dust in the mouth
or the very fine sand and pebbles between the teeth and the
cheeks.

In the dream there was the image of a body fallen across the road.

On the surface of the screen, at first very gray very far as in the
fog under the meadow in Tarnac, at the chemin des Rameaux, I
see him as a child who is neither swallowed nor nothing
but as in slow motion a sliding
his body is glued it is pushed it is not eaten or projected or
nothing it is pushed
in slow motion pushed
and he isn't dead nor alive

he is the child fallen in the hollow of the road

For a few seconds he becomes confounded with the photograph
of the image, it's a street in Tarnac or Sfax or Guilin in the South
of China,
there is only dust left and the child disappears in the dust and in
the image of the dust.

(

)

Later he is warm and I take him away, and I know now he will be
born like that
carried at arm's length
but I don't know when nor where nor in what garden.

And now I am in front of you and I don't know how
but here are the steps, the stairs of the hospital, the double-sloped
road, the heat of the tarmac—

—I am standing with the thought of
the child and the erased color of the image or the caved in color of the
box or the window and the saliva and the blood and the tongue slightly
stiff then or as from injections.

..... I take up the description of the poem or the dream
he is everywhere in the dust of the street
the street is open with its shutters of cloth and for instance
in this poem there are trees
and a branch
it yields, it yields ever more, it's a bit like the body of the child.

he yields he's a bow he is thrown in slow motion pushed a little to the front of the car as if everything was happening inside a lake or a pond or the river the Vienne under a great volume of luminous cold water.

And this story was that of a path of a garden or maybe a park

with a fern meadow, vegetal mass, a few gray and blue marbles under high trees

but here I must introduce the angels
(there are angels they are listening they unfold their hands and their branches).

In the story the character was moving forward, he describes himself moving forward entering the alleys which then turn,
(and it's in the middle of the poem, it makes the special sound of water all around as in the middle of the river at Pont Lagorce in Tarnac where I was born, where I still am every day and every night, and that's why I know it is the center, because of this special noise of the water, because of its incredible transparency),

so it's here the child reappears and he takes the place of this angel or these angels (I said there were several of them in a cluster a little above the ground, playing music with the trees circulating freely, watching and following the alley, descending a little bit more in the brightness of winter today on this 20th February 1937),

they, they called that *the bells*, all these landscapes with stone holes and fountains and these sorts of pools for the dead and the birds.

A=N=G=E

He was running,

he was gliding ahead of himself inside ahead he was passing from body to body

he was running he was bending over, he will soon reach the entrance of the cave and under the wall or surface or face of stone motionless then here hit sunk stiff as a post rigid

and me too not saying anything with this wall as mirror or like a mirror.

And that's how it is but there is no more path, no more alley and this path without a path leads me towards the wall and the mirror or the mirror or the hedge of these trees, on the path to Javaud.

Exactly mute like a child
simple and stiff like the surface of paper like a bed of ivy and that's all.

*

We are in Tarnac, the color is dark gray, the dark and deep cold of the
grass, the color is that of the deep cold of the slate beds and that's here.

*“The world already has the dream of such a time; it has yet to come into
possession of the consciousness that will allow it to experience
its reality.”*

11. BUILDING CABINS

CIRCULATING FREELY CIRCULATING FREELY

Building cabins

Vanishing

Vanishing

Erasing one's tracks

Knocking over, bit by bit, all the obstacles.

*

Meanwhile the image enters the image and everything is confounded with the photograph of trees until it achieves deviated writing.

And all around:

A rotation of cameras, digitized voices
police controls
patrols
announce a delay, fifteen, twenty, forty-five minutes
change platforms

indeterminate technical incidents

The image is dragged along the streets, it's run over by the car tires.

The image in chalk on the slate gray of the slate

erased

torn

spat

further, Athens, Thessalonika, there are more streets on fire in
the cities these streets in city centers inside around the cities in the city
centers around.

Everywhere the oil stains the rust a light of fog, of cold and conflagration.

No claim of responsibility no message nothing

Indeterminate technical incident.

Meanwhile the image covers the image
until it becomes a deviated dialect writing.

—I pick up from the word “communist.”

Communist is this word caught in water, this body caught in water.
Here in Tarnac the fog sits on the surface of the water
creases the banks of ferns it's night.

No claim of responsibility no message, *politics as*
the negation of politics
the way down to the river
the photograph falling on the tar
the light of cold and conflagration, the slopes, the slopes
the Javaud path, the Larpée path
the writing deviated broken like that, like the voice
like it
like no response.

One must (one must build cabins)
One must

I know a tree
One must build cabins in the trees
make oneself a bed of ferns
block stations ring roads highways factories
supermarkets airports,

use the accidents of the ground

I have decided to choose my own dialect
to write I use the ground's accidents.

At night I accompany them to the river
they say they drink water from their hands
they drink water from their palms.

One must (one must build cabins)

knock down walls
 demolish staircases
make holes in ceilings, roofs
 tear down doors
 wall up windows

make each floor a fire stand.

I am still standing here and now it is raining,

the rain falls, it falls, they walk and talk and the rain
clothes them up and shakes their eyelids
they fall and rise again and start running
they are barefoot in the water and earth
they dance they speak of joy *joy* is the word they say they repeat it joy
is their word they say no other word and the rain sparks a light in their eyes
in the dark like those of birds,

and one of them lies down and asks that his face and throat should be tread
upon he is now on his back he shuts his eyes his robe weighs on the damp
ground he feels the soles of feet against the veins of his neck and his face,
he smiles.

In the same scene a few minutes later
they wait bunched together huddling they listen to the noise broken broken
of the rain on the top of their heads on their shoulders and their bent
knees

*They do not know where they are going
They turn themselves round and round.*

Coming soon clover-leaves
parking lots great vaulted spaces floors
the neon obscurity of basements, puddles of water and oil puddles of gaso-
line blue shimmers on machines and the ceaseless noise from the engines
in the boiler rooms.

Hands flat on the bark
they cut branches they pick flowers they sing they leave
with their bouquets
they go and throw the branches on the ground
make a path in front of the threshold with stones leftover
straw peelings shells bones
they hold hands they throw one branch after the next as
to a song they
make a hedge of their bodies a blazing and sheared bush.

Outside the reservoirs are full
The trucks exit between the gates
they leave the construction site the warehouses full of earth
and bags.

—*Whether I hear the music of everything, yes*

, here I must introduce angels they unfold their hands
and their branches

Exits from the worksite prison walls barbed wire cameras
and this time the sky is gray open like a tarp
it's like an angel a swarm of leaves and like eyes.

They turn themselves round and round and laugh
Their lips move

The description ends like an image-sentence, an unphotographable sentence
but stretched taut like a flat object, a sort of slate.

They continue to turn
immobile and naked tops spinning in the dark

*

One must (one must build cabins)

Make each page into a fire stand
Make each sentence into a fire stand

"Insurrection is the most sacred of duties"
(Robespierre).

12. CAUGHT IN WATER

Marat, Marat's smile. He said that nothing frightens timid citizens as much as popular uprisings: they tend to destroy their happiness in bringing about a new order of things; they speak only of pacifying the people; they have powerful reasons for this, for to what do we owe freedom if not to popular uprisings? It was a popular uprising that brought down the Bastille, it was a popular uprising that aborted the aristocratic conspiracy, the National Assembly took office only thanks to popular uprising, it is to popular uprisings that we owe everything, arise, arise!

reject your illusions prepare for the struggle reject your illusions prepare for the

Snakes frighten those that do not know them.
Whence study, our passion for study. Inquiry.

In the first image a peasant was speaking to children. They listened with heads bowed. He said: "In the guerilla warfare zone one needed to be constantly ready to disperse the school and hide the equipment."

Beneath the second image the caption said simply: "conduct inquiries to conform yourselves to reality."

Mallarmé watched the death of Anatole, the open grave and the thrown flowers, and the earth.

He cut, tore, piled up pieces of paper.

Scraps of sentences. He had this strange way of speaking of the earth. It was almost as if he had earth in his mouth.

Mallarmé says that the body of the son and the body of the father are the same body. He writes these words on society, he writes that it is *furios*.

He writes: “vile society that had to crush him, perhaps”

Mallarmé looks at his hands, and writes further:

“What, the thing I am saying / is true—it is / not only /
music --- / etc.”

In this film an image is said to be “black at the center.”

Mallarmé writes: “death-purging / image in us / purged by / tears— /
remains only / not touching— / but speaking.”

At Flins, the Renault factory had been on strike since the middle of May. The conflict continued despite the accords signed by the unions. The universities were taken back by police one by one. Everything was over, everything continued. In the night from the fifth to the sixth of June, knocking down the Les Mureaux gates at the back of the factory with half-tracks, machine guns, 3,000 riot police invade the factory. In front of the central transformer. They cut the electricity. They cut the telephone.

On June tenth a team finds itself at the tip of an island near the Meulan bridge. At four o'clock.

They dive in.

The one who cried out takes a long time to drown. He disappears. Another tries to pull him out by his clothes. The fabric tears. He is carried off.

This slow motion, that's war.

The surface of writings is like the mirror of lakes, rivers, streams. It seems to reflect the uppermost sky, but this uppermost sky is in truth only the reflection of the sky caught in water.

This story is simple but. Because in reality all stories are made of several stories and all of these severals do not have the same size or weight. There are these bits that are together several and climb over and enter under each other, they form a rough, bumpy terrain, they pile up and jostle, pile up and gather. As simple as hopscotch or a kite, and like grammar, supple as can be.

And these several stories are made of one, that of revision at a distance (whence the fact that I am scrawled in luminous gray when I lean over the surface):

“I revise the child I am from afar.”

Some dream of a river bank, invisible. Of an invisible bank. Of an invisible river. A dream in which the only image is the sound without sound of a slope. The beginning of a gesture in few words. The exercise consists in finding the instant when the gesture begins, or simply the sound of the words, or like the memory of voices, of a voice.

A poem is not an island, certainly not.

13. WE ARE ALL

[additional givens for the initial scene]

In the initial scene a child is standing in the dark. He stands straight, sewn, mute, slow, or

felt against his hands all the nocturnal thickness of his skin. The density of his veins, and of his

nerves. He is huddled black in a stalk in the dark with his eyes open onto nothing except the thickness of

him, would draw close against him and press him against the walls. The floor of the room open to the sky is stretched

or time has changed him into a hard-skinned tree, feet rooted in the night of the floor, in

towards him and clutch him and push against his temples. He withdraws in himself inside the bark, he

drawn in under his skin, under the bark's hard black skin, he is standing inside of him-

the interior of his eyes *like dust*. It is raining. The sand absorbs the rain. It is raining.

In this scene *is invisible*, has become invisible, he is confounded, has entered the dark,

he is standing on the floor, on the square of the floor. The place is a carpet,
a square whose

facing, two walls are facing. He is comprised in this closed space. He
perceives nothing. He knows

later, the floor flat and humid. Identical with obscurity, and he himself sees
nothing, he opens and

on the floor the sand is black or thought black

the four sides), grow vertically. A cube or bedroom without a roof, a room,
a cell.

constricts him. The walls grow horizontally to touch him.

He becomes the tree, or like a tree. He is inside the tree or the tree is in-
side.

Dialogue :

(“I listen to the noise inside, the noise of the square inside me”)

Here give the communist hypothesis

(later, side chapel, subjected to density
—bare feet on the ground)
start the prayer over

common egalitarian
common egalitarian
silent common egalitarian.

I come back
(in the hypothesis of return : *commune*).

The name : creased, wrung (or washed, wrung)
The name as place-name, the name of a place
(photograph of the graves)
reconstruction of the itinerary from the gate to the grave

the *washhouse-church-sluice* complex which includes the proper name or
“family” name

the *slaughterhouse-cross-garden* complex (the hanged man)
the enigma of the suicide (suicide-being, trees and branches, to the sound
of water)
or from one bridge to the next (rocks, leaps, down-to-upstream)

long sought the form of the village
now only perceive entry-exits, climb-descents,
angles, holes, and the series of cellars, washhouses,
the hollows of the water.

presence basso continuo of only one of those paths, the one towards the
river, corridor-cold, stones and ferns, of the Lagorce bridge
stone wall, wood,
damp earth
slope, then fast, then very fast,
disappearance of ants
with that (deep disposition) under the eyelids
(drawn far in, still breathable it seems),

and always more saffron, more ground coffee on a shelf, under lithographs
and oilcloths, the bowls and tablecloths of a priest-chaplain the old man,

where does the immaterial green curtain begin in thin layers,
of green and fog,
the mist, in the great continuous buzzing (or din),

, under the meadow, speaking in its tongue, that of ferns and woods (clear
shallows, pebbles) clearings and foxgloves and gentians this house sur-
rounded by winter
(a deathly hush)
obscurity under tall trees, as in church
like barbarian or berber, the etching of streams,

a continuous chant or psalm,
the continuous chant between banks, covered, a couple of inches
(or this folly, herbivore)

*

“where we are all whatever singularities”

14. TEN APRIL 1994

Their time constructs itself around them simply,

Marked only by the taste of the moment wherein they live,
and the signs on the walls

Time coils itself anew, the moment recurs.

.....

Memory being the present as I write it. The groundless present of the
present being memory. Memory being the present that I press and produce.
Like an eye without ground and without edges.

“I went down to look at the river”

1—inner voices, *us*

2—I listen to the inner noise, the noise of the square in me

3—the noise that I hear is only the noise of my blood inside my head

4—the silence of the ferns

5—the question of revolution is from now on a musical question

April 10th, 1994, Kurt Cobain's suicide
shotgun in the mouth
explosion face and skull

of the written defeat
Interview / coma / music
R'n'R as "social crime"

come as you are

: i hate myself and i want to die

.....

at the top of the column at the angle of the ornamental basket a mask with
fixed eyes gulps into its open mouth the head of a bird whose extended
wings hang down to the astragalus.

15. *BEYOND VOICE*

January 5th. The image of a “black box” (like those on airplanes) has remained with me. Words said in negative, waiting to be developed in the dark. Yes, such “blind objectivity.” In his letter he tells me that I speak as an illiterate with a headless body.

January 7th, “beyond voice.”

The cross is cloven,
each part hanging. (“and so his hands and his feet seemed to be pierced in their centers by nails whose heads were in the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet and the nails protruded so that one could fit a finger in the space as into a ring, and the heads of the nails were round and black.”)

Night of January 9th to 10th.

Dreamed of Serge Hajlblum,
rising from beyond his death
now confirmed, announced.
Essentially his face, transformed
(which was superimposed on that
of Denis Lavant seen the day
before on a TV screen playing a

man wounded in the head almost mad). I question him about that face, its strange contours, its hardness.

January 29th. Siena with B. “Psychiatric” parking lot and Catherine of S., her pillow of bricks, her finger.

February 14th. Snowed in. Unreachable. Intense cold, inside. The wind, *feng*. Erasure of lines, the blackboard (of the trees) completely covered with chalk. Cloth white with chalk dust. “The history of dust.” Received from B. the pages entitled “a day of grace.”

February 15th. Received your day of grace which in fact does not specify (no doubt cannot specify) *anything* of what binds the experience (merely named, no more) to its consequences (its paradoxical consequences). The only prior justification (“might I say”) through refusal (NO) of a sense that contradicts (that is contradicted by) the practice of writing caused by and confronting the absence of sense or absent sense, and the senselessness of everything. And the movement (of things of grace) from Experience to the experience of seeing (heightened

relation to the real, etc.). **March 2nd.** how does this new cavity / a body falling at a glance, whose? / or seeing the sky pour down straight on the eyelids and gray-black / going down for obstruction of the frame, curtain of ferns, falling heavy to prepare the ground / *feng, feng* / a moist and slow ground (stopped).

March 21st. — A tree was hit. — The ground shook, yes. (that's when the gray lake of sky becomes nearly black, then black and it's night, and now the music starts or starts again, it comes from the forest, crosses it, and that's all). **April 2nd.** *You don't start a war, you're in it.* You do not start, you're there. Rimbaud: "I am on strike." In this *regained obscurity*, then ("I drank, squatted in the heather Wrapped in a hazel grove By a fog") zones of actual autonomy *zones of provisional autonomy* corridors for retreat if needed to resume elsewhere further under cover, the practice of "I am on strike." / for a politics of the present of presence of permanent invention, gestural gazes, continuous fabrication of cabins —

16. *FACING LATERAL*

I copy out the washhouse. Makes sense by the light-noise. Is surface contemplation. Is inside simple vibration. Angle figure or passive or engulfed in the hole.

Back this winter in the obscuration of the water. Climbing to the washhouse. And remaining there.

Further down. Yes the road is beaten ground, beaten. Rather light. Or like packed sand. Vertical and climbing. From the ball of the eyes to the construction of the basin. Stones and black hole, luminous-black. A memory of dust. Or like a white sand stirred up.

The folly of the washhouse belongs to this fragment of memory entitled "a history of dust." It floats midway uphill, as if separated from the ground, detached.

To the right a meadow and the tree. A tree. Mass of green, indiscernible, mass. Closed to the left, open to the right. Colorless-closed to the left, green-open to the right. Thus. A continuous noise, level. It makes sense by the light-noise. At eye level.

In nervous fluttering of the eyelids. Trembling of the temples. Tepid warmth, continuous, level.

The targets.

They hang. I see them at the end of the corridor. Or hidden under the liturgical vestments in the sacristy. Locked.

I see them at the back of cabinets.

Like a remnant of blood in the folds. Or stained with black and red ink. Pushed against the wood, packed damp, as though under autumn manure.

They lean. They open their dwarf hands.

Flat spinning-tops.

They sweat, they tilt their paper cheeks.

Several holes away, incalculable.

I heard only this word: "tear."

He had said in a very low voice: “the animal torn in the fields.”

Who rounded the eyes? Who pierced the holes of the nostrils? Who opened the mouth? Who stretched and entwined the nerves? Who drew the channels of the veins? Who hardened the bones? Who wrapped the flesh? Who separated the fingers and limbs? Who spread the soles of the feet? Who dug the pores? Who extended the spleen? Who shaped the pyramid of the heart? Who swelled the sides? Who stretched the liver? Who shaped the cavern of the lungs? Who hollowed the cavity of the stomach?

The white stripes are pasted on the skin.

The eyes will be shut in the palm of the hands.

Here is our present. Barely, through these moist
circles, do we perceive, groaning, the sky. At intervals,
we cease to see it. Some ancients said that the
Christians had no temple.

I saw him bring his hands to his temples. Then he said isolating each word: "I, am, healed." He repeated it more and more slowly. He took a step forward. He seemed to lose his balance. But still he said: "I think, with terror, of my other leg."

Several children were singing, lifting their fingers.

Others were squatting as though at the bottom of a boat and their hands worried the drape of their black aprons.

All the rest of the scene was blank and bright.

Now he turns the image over, he wants to begin his reading, but the image detains him, it wants to wet his fingers.

: this piece of fabric “having touched the holy” is held fixed by two red threads, crossing at a right angle in the center. She holds the crucifix like a baby, and its swaddling is roses, we see that she bleeds a little, her hands grazing the thorns.

A little later he wants to begin his reading, he cannot, he begins to vomit, to suffocate, his tongue feels wooden.

Farther down the slope, there was the Slaughterhouse.
And on the other side of the road, under the ferns and
branches, the monument of love, *Monumentum Amoris*.

A piece of meat, hot, stiff and sticky like the old
flowers on the altar.

“I feel the shadow of the tree. It falls along a diagonal.
Piercing.”

And this question which returned but whose meaning he
did not understand: “Whom do you hold yours from?”

What does he know in this instant when he pushes the door? Does he know that he cannot hear him? That this music is only that of the stream beneath the road? That he cannot see? That he would be frightened on touching it?

Rubble! What fruits! No, no need, really, no, “no perfection.”

That foam, since childhood, the one on the river, he had called it *limonade*.

He goes on, hands before him. He believes he is crossing through a flowering bush. He knows it's an illusion. “Geraniums in beds of soil.” The cruel scent of these flowers. Their electric force.

“I hold to my mother’s breasts.” Lips parted, crying.

Always farther and deeper. He said he was going “beside himself,” beyond his face, toward the tips of his fingers, into the depths of his lungs.

As he was crying, the slope of the road kept growing. Or the washhouse rising into the sky. Shortly hidden by the clouds.

“I am alone, I open my eyes, I am alone.”

And in fact, “it dies.” There is nothing in those rooms, in those cabinets. Nothing only the odor of dust, a history of dust, this history of dust, this history, his history. Nothing or still what he calls “no space” and “without flowers” (this illusion of bushes, bouquets, the scentless and faded mass of geraniums).

On the altar nothing but the trace of flies. And a few lines of rust.

And for how much longer? In front of a crumbling wall.

He had understood it as an order.

Several things to overcome, and always, the respect for mystery (that was the first lesson, the most remote, the briefest, the listening and respect for mystery, that of that language and these unknown objects, placed here and there, and their erased presence, and the feeling of their presence, their music).

“I take them. I should place my fingers on them. Blow my nose in them.”

Always at the same time, here, on the hillside, at the crossing of the five roads.

In one of his last letters he wrote: "I hope that Italy...etc."
You are there. "In the faster sky above eucalyptus, agaves.
In wheels of fire, twenty-four degrees centigrade or more
on the asphalt, etc. Us on the banks of the Vienne,
listening until nightfall to the noise of pebbles, the
creaking of the planks."

But the page must have remained a long time on the
ground, under the rain of several storms. A little farther
one could still read, in soiled and faded ink: "similar in
their caprices to modern chemistry."

Some white hens. And now it is the wind that speaks.

Sleeping with him.

Or better: holding up the hands, open.

Walking under cover, entering, descending. Holding up the hands, open, pronouncing several times the same words.

At once dizzy and overhanging the dizziness.

The river is in ruin, ruined. A rain of blue waste, the impossible decoding of some signs, there on the wall, at the tablecloth's edges.

“I don't know what my violence means.”

And the village circular, or like an arc, the water falling, centered, in the hollow of the road, under the hazel trees. A stream of blood to the offertory. A God *emptied*.

Only a precise language...

17. SCRAPS

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.....

L'Écluse.
Le Jardin.
La Sacristie.
Le Lavoir.
Le Prabou.
La Ganne.
L'Abattoir.
L'Allée du Château.
La Fontaine.
Javaud.
Le Chemin de Larpée.
Goutte Nègre.

In this gray book there was at first nothing more than names, a few poems learned in school, a torn letter, a drawing.

After some blank pages another list seemed to set forth boundaries to a territory:

Le Fond de la Verdure.
Le Champ des Rameaux.
Le Pont Lagorce.
Le Pont Lapierre.
Le Bois du Chat.
La Ferme de la Berbeyrolle.

This seemed to begin something like a diary but it contained no more than two sentences.

I opened the moldy door; I sought, beneath the flowers, the double-ply fabric called a pall, square, hemp and flax, six inches.

I stayed awhile, there, on the bridge, gazing, between the planks, at the water's motion.

Near the end of the notebook a final list gave fourteen names of villages or hamlets belonging to the *commune* of Tarnac, a kind of sonnet, followed by four sequences or fragments surely taken from a longer collection.

On the very last page, the definition given for the word “scraps” seemed an allusion to cutting, pasting, placing, juxtaposing, this settling of matter in suspension, in a state of slow decomposition,

Chabannes
Le Monteil
Couffy
La Fage
Larfeuil
Lacombe
Les Maisons
Merciel
Clupeau
Theillet
Le Mas à Loubaud
Le Treich
Broussas
Orliac

“bloody under white skin”

“she who, in the nape of her neck, had recognized Presence”

“heaven will be folded like a book.” He or she who speaks these words knows of death (of her own death?) that heaven will be folded like a book. Now it hangs over us, it’s a skin that hangs over us.

“a moment of feeling distraught”

Scraps: debris of matter (paper, cloth, wood) lost after a cut.

Other leaves remained on the bedroom floor. The few fragments still legible confirmed the break and abandonment.

“My joints are separating.”

“I wait for it.”

“I was crying so much that I saw my tears flow. When I felt the burning, I went to get cold water.”

“I must die from hunger, from cold, and die naked. Climbing the steps.”

“My hands have not succeeded in opening the book. I fell asleep in desire.”

“...meat and fish hanging from my neck.”

“I understood this prevented me from falling to the ground.”

“I am north, with night-terrors. I am taller and taller.”

“This madness for birds, sometimes, since the collapse.”

INDEX

“what penetrates him unawares”

1. a history of dust.
2. looking until the gaze becomes extinct.
3. a mask with fixed eyes gulps down the head of a bird.
4. neither tracks nor prints. Ferns by the thousand.
5. a sound of prayer or psalm, a sound of vegetal dust.
6. the animals had ceased to move. I went down to that bridge to see the noise of water.
7. the rain won't be able to erase the river.
8. and the two extended wings fell back on the stone. No shelter beside branches and huts, cabins.
9. you wanted to photograph the night.
10. there is nothing left between God and us.
11. lived “in the style of waiting.”
12. as if a thicket of bare forest had had to be crossed.
13. a word traced on the slate-gray of the slate.
14. at the end there will be nothing but this point without caption.
15. this sentence is friable.
16. the paper continues to drink.
17. the box resembles the inside of a truck, dark and dilapidated.
18. I decided to choose my dialect.
19. for me *communist* is this word caught in water.
20. we have nothing other than time, only time, it's our cabin.
21. now the body is alone with the light.
22. the noise I hear is the noise of my blood inside my head.

23. the Vienne, under a great volume of cold and luminous water.
24. where we are all whatever singularities.
25. until it achieves deviated writing.
26. whether I hear the music of everything, yes.
27. knocking over, bit by bit, all the obstacles, building cabins.
28. inner voices, *us*.

ELEMENTS OF THE CHRONOLOGY

February 20, 1837. Inner voices. Untitled poem.

October 8, 1879. Death of Anatole / Mallarmé

August 1908. HAG accepted into Third Order

[1940] 1942 (?) - 1945. Bavarian Night

April 2, 1946. Birth

1950. Rossellini: The Flowers of St. Francis

1952-1958. "Tarnac" Notebooks (I-XXIV)

August 1969. Tunis-consulate, shuttered

April 16, 1964. Death of HAG. Cemetery of T.

June 10, 1968. Gilles Tautin drowns in the Seine. Flins.

1974. Carthage. Impasse of waves

November 22, 1976. Birth of A.

1980-97. Sigonce, Max Stirner cell

1989. First trip to China. Wuhan

September 1991. Black polaroid. Rue d'Assise

April 10, 1994. Suicide of Kurt Cobain

1995. Steve Reich: *City Life*

October 2007. *Film à venir*, to Michel Crozatier

November 11, 2008. Arrests in Tarnac.

2009. *Sorties*, for Édouard Levé

January 5–April 2, 2009. “Beyond voice” notebook

“to the point where one can no longer desire to turn back”

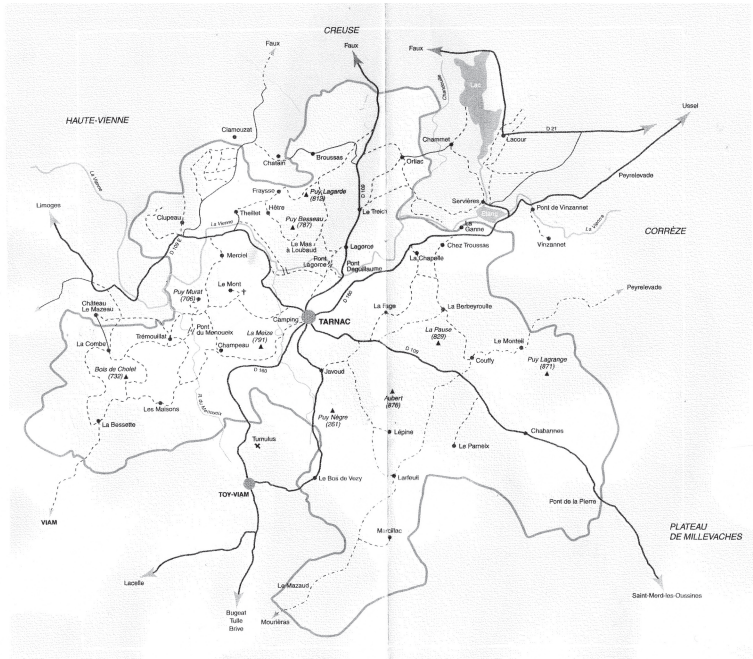


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“of nothing lie”

AFTERWORD

Jean-Marie Gleize was born in Paris in 1946. He was thus of an age to be a Maoist and militant in 1968, identifications he retains to this day. He published his first book (on Francis Ponge) in 1981, and became a professor at l'Université d'Aix-en-Provence as well as at the prestigious l'École normale supérieure de Lyon where he would direct the *Centre d'études poétiques* from 1999-2009. In addition to his scholarly work on modern and contemporary French, Arabic, and American poetry, he would enter the first rank of French poets (or "post-poets," as is sometimes said), aesthetically affiliated with peers such as Emmanuel Hocquard, Anne-Marie Albiach, and Claude Royet-Journoud.

Gleize's formulations of *nudité* and *littéralité* give some sense of his poetics, antithetical to the verse of flourish and ornament, but also to the performance of allusive depth and immanent ambiguity. Directness, detail, and documentation are keywords. Among his extraordinary collection of scholarly and poetic writings are ten books with the storied publisher Éditions du Seuil. He shares some affinities with his editor there, Denis Roche, who has had his own remarkable career as both poet and photographer. The problem and promise of the mute image, and its affinity for the word or phrase so precise and astringent as to seem itself paradoxically mute — these are matters that have animated Gleize's writing. They are also part of the artifice that would be available to him for this, a book length sequence concerning a very small town.

Tarnac is a *commune* (in France the term denotes any administrative unit large enough to have a town hall) in the *département* of Corrèze. It sits on the prosaically named Plateau de Millevaches, a step partway up France's Massif Central. It is small enough that a plain bar-café sharing a wall with

a two-aisle general store is the center of the village's social activity. The population has been declining since the 1936 census; the most recent official measure is barely above 300. It is hard to get a good count for two contrary reasons. One is that there are certain economic benefits to claiming this department as home; as a consequence, one finds some number of largely unused houses, the residents most often found in Paris. The other is that the village and environs host a commune in the sense more familiar to Americans, a project in collective living that occupies several farms and farmhouses distributed unevenly among the forests, pathways, and streams of the area.

Once one goes more than about 50 kilometers from Corrèze, the name "Tarnac" generally refers to this agglomeration of mostly young people. The commune is for the most part deeply influenced by (or part of) the collective of political writers and thinkers known by the name of their former journal, *Tiqqun*. This strain of political thought, a kind of radical communism often understood equally as anarchist in nature, is inflected by thinkers such as Foucault, Heidegger, Debord, Negri — as well as Giorgio Agamben, with whom at least one "Tiqquist" had studied. It is possible that some portion of the Tarnac commune comprised as well "The Invisible Committee," who authored in 2007 a brief text titled *L'Insurrection qui vient*.

That tract, lyrical and ferocious, features what might be described (to borrow a phrase from elsewhere) as a "communism of attack, communism of retreat." The retreat from the snares and compulsions of the metropolis, capital's victory of living death, is clear enough in and around the village. The ideas of attack are perforce more vague, but here is one well-known passage:

The technical infrastructure of the metropolis is vulnerable. Its flows amount to more than the transportation of people and commodities. Information and energy circulates via wire networks, fibers and channels, and these can be attacked. Nowadays sabotaging the social machine with any real effect involves reappropriating and reinventing the ways of interrupting its networks. How can a TGV line or an electrical network be rendered

useless? How does one find the weak points in computer networks, or scramble radio waves and fill screens with white noise?

The little book would be published in English two years later under the name *The Coming Insurrection*. By then, more than twenty commune residents had been arrested via early morning assault, with helicopters above and dogs below. *L’Affaire Tarnac* — swiftly a national *cause célèbre* — raised the specter of domestic terrorism, and in so doing seemed to resurrect the *lois scélérates*, devised to suppress anarchism at the end of the 19th century (a definition of “anarchy” from that period appears herein). Of those arrested, “The Tarnac Nine” would be charged with “criminal association for the purposes of terrorist activity,” for supposedly sabotaging the rail lines and causing several delays.

They were held for varying lengths; one, identified as a leader, remained in jail for more than six months. The prosecutor’s claim sounded grand, even enviable: “the goal of their activity is to attack the institutions of the state, and to upset by violence — I emphasize violence, and not contestation which is permitted — the political, economic and social order.” The corresponding evidence was profoundly lacking. Shortly after the indictments a petition for their release was published in *Le Monde*. It was signed by globally famous intellectuals, mostly philosophers: Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, Christine Delphy, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, and Slavoj Žižek. Agamben, of course. It was also signed by two poets: Bernard Noël and Jean-Marie Gleize (though the latter, according to his habit, did not identify himself as such).

Gleize was familiar with Tarnac long before *L’Affaire*. Indeed he is a familiar of the place; in his own words, “the cemetery is full of Gleize.” He calls it “the village of my childhood,” where he visited, spending summers with his grandparents; his son has moved back. The landscape through which the book wanders is eerie then, but not uncanny. Various other relatives remain in the hamlet; one of his uncles was the curate, watching over the town’s souls. This history runs throughout the book, the names and places, along with the dramatic events of 2008 and after, and some more oblique

specters united by a sort of holy suffering: Francis of Assisi, Kurt Cobain, St. Angela of Foligno. Occasional passages are drawn as well from Debord, Duras, Ponge, Mallarmé, and others, always under the strict surveillance of quotation marks. In the way of extraordinary extended poems, the book makes a unity of these figures and events, although it is a charged and jagged unity. Just so for Gleize there is a continuity between his own history and that of the village's recent past: "Tarnac and the whole plateau have a tradition of resistance and communism. The presence of an actual liberatory commune is quite natural and quite logical."

The book's breadth, intensities, and ambition are perhaps signaled by the team of translators assembled for the task. Bonnie Roy is a young scholar and poet specializing in contemporary work; Abigail Lang teaches at the Université Paris-Diderot where she is a scholar of modernist poetry, and a noted translator of English-language poetry into French. Other friends helped as well in matters of translation and otherwise. And me, I was lucky enough to spend some time on the plateau, where almost entirely by chance I heard Jean-Marie Gleize read from this book in front of an old church and was taken by the sound of poetry and commune clicking together.

—Joshua Clover

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