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SPECIAL ISSUE ON
CONTEMPORARY FRENCH POETRY

GUEST EDITOR
Richard Stamelman

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Abstract. Dramatic self-projection and the use of recurrent or occasional personae are features manifest in André Frénaud's poetry. One also notes a tendency to multiply unique phenomena. Furthermore, the medium of his poetry displays huge variety in form and tone. This study reviews a selection of these interacting characteristics and investigates their relationship to the poet, who represents the unity beneath the diversity, but whose self proves versatile in its exploration of world, word and identity through the revealing ventriloquy of plural voices. (RL)

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Abstract. For Philippe Jaccottet the real is the force of life itself. It is also a rapid, fleeting perception made all the more ephemeral by the mimetic imprecision of language. The essence of the real, since it is always other than what is said about it, can never be fully represented. This alterity of the real and the fundamental lack it announces provoke poetic language. By means of a poetics of passage, of passing through, of à travers, Jaccottet confronts the otherness of the unseizable landscape and of the elusive language in which he dwells. In the meditative, prose poem A Travers un verger (1975) he traverses the mysterious space of an orchard and a text, of trembling blossoms and quivering words, in an effort to understand the opposition between the limits of language and the limitlessness of the real. Out of the experience of landscape and the language that describes it—out of the epiphany of the real that a flowering orchard sustains but that images only fail to seize—"something" is perceived: an ineffable, indescribable "something" that dwells in the beyond of representation. (RS)

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they can mediate the encounter of self and other. The human word signifies itself through the substance of the world and the communion of beings. At the intersection of natural reality—the center of the real for Jourdan—and of language are found the garden, the earth, places of an ephemeral, haiku-like presence where the natural opens itself to the human. (RS)

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'tensions' emerge as characteristically significant: the telluric and the cosmic; entropy and reintegration; body, mind and soul; passingness and search; language as problem and resolution; minimality and maximality; violence and love. In each poet high intensity is matched with wisdom and serenity, problematic though they may be. The poetic project of these women may be "fragmented" or more "coherent"; always it is marked by a profundity of perception and sentiment. (MB)