



High Solitude

Léon-Paul Fargue

Fargue taught us to sublimate everyday life and make the highest poetry out of it.

— Max Jacob

There is an unknown demon within Fargue that seems to drive him to the most audacious comparisons, in which he makes use of animals, cathedrals, or monsters to castigate the moral squalor of his day. It is a matter of pure poetry, an agility of spirit that leads him ceaselessly to find resemblances or associations for everything his eyes fall on.

— André Beucler

There are so many different individuals in Fargue, so many secrets, so many torturous byways, so many personalities (and each one of them so complex), that half a dozen critics would hardly suffice to sum him up.

— Edmond Jaloux

Nothing could be more astounding to me than Léon-Paul Fargue's "Horoscope" — Absurd, incongruous, touching, and nostalgic.

— Henry Miller

Fargue transforms reality & incites it to undergo perilous metamorphoses, and eventually drives it some way toward the abyss. That is the danger of an art devoted to metaphor: it calls everything into question; but that is also its merit, and in the lament for the life of another era which Fargue readily, too readily, intones, it is right that we should hear the wrong note, the unheard of note, which intrudes into it like the cracked echo of an enigma.

— Maurice Blanchot

LE PLAN DE LA VILLE, CITE, VNIVERSI



Certe velle est in astra munda.
Declare in munda signifiant.
En pugna et in-bis puerion.
Qui de tota chysa abonde.

TEET FAVXBOVRGS DE PARIS AVEC LA DESCRIPTION DE SON ANTIQVITE
ET SINGVLARITES



Leon-Franz Fargy

High Solitude

Léon-Paul Fargue

High Solitude

Translated by Rainer J. Hanshe



Contra Mundum Press New York · London · Melbourne

High Solitude

© 2024 Rainer J. Hanshe;

Haute Solitude

© 1941 Léon-Paul Fargue.

First Contra Mundum Press
edition 2024.

“Advocacy of Disorder” was
first featured in *Firmament*,
Vol. 1, № 3 (July 2021): 57–61,
and “Leaning” in *minor
literature[s]*, «rentrée littéraire»
(Sept 2024). The translator
expresses his gratitude to
Joshua Roothes & Tobias Ryan.

All Rights Reserved under
International & Pan-American
Copyright Conventions.

No part of this book may
be reproduced in any form
or by any electronic means,
including information storage
and retrieval systems, without
permission in writing from
the publisher, except by a
reviewer who may quote
brief passages in a review.

Library of Congress
Cataloguing-in-Publication
Data

Fargue, Léon-Paul,
1876–1947
High Solitude /
Léon-Paul Fargue

—1st Contra Mundum Press
Edition

220 pp., 5 × 8 in.

ISBN 9781940625706

- I. Fargue, Léon-Paul.
- II. Title.
- III. Hanshe, Rainer J.
- IV. Translator.

2024937543

This publication has been
aided by support from
The Montparnasse Cultural
Foundation.

THE MONTPARNASSE
CULTURAL FOUNDATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0	I Dreamed
9	Prehistoric Visitation
26	Alarm Clock
31	Secret Geography
39	Walk
49	White Nights
57	Horoscope
64	Paris
76	In the Morning
82	Leaning
90	Erythema of the Devil
105	Advocacy of Disorder
111	High Solitude
123	Nomadic Spectres
129	The Death of the Ghost
142	The Wait
153	Azazel
165	Danse Mabraque
180	Again...

... then were served...

... the happelourdes, the badigonyeuses, the étangourres, the auchbares of the sea, the godiveaulx de lévrier, biens bons, the bourbelettes, Primeronges, the bregizollons, the frelinginiques, the starabillatz, the cornicabotz, the cornamcuz revestuz de bize, the jerangoys, the mopsopige, the chinfreneaulx, the volepupinges, the ondre spondredetz, the friande vestanpenarderie, the bandyelivagues, viande rare, the notrodilles, the spondrilloches, the ancrastabotz, the croquinpedaignes, the gringuenaules à la joncade...

How the Lady Lanterns were served at supper.

Rabelais, The Fifth Book of the Good Pantagruel, XXXII bis.

Horoscope

I know my time. Without having examined with a magnifying glass, a compass, a goniometer, a red light, the point of the ecliptic found on the horizon when I crossed the void with joined feet, I know and recognize myself as if I were a good banknote. When I invite myself to a restaurant in the world or at night, I consent, I let myself go, but deep down, I'm skeptical. I know myself.

My sign is that of the holacanthes, zebra of the sea, Heniochi, barbed ptéroïs, squamous cerniers, spiny fish with suckers and muzzles so blue that they appear close-shaven. I live in the company of seafarers, jazz writers, astronomers, hypnotizers, physiologists, tobacconists, and hoteliers. They are my secret brothers, haunted by the same swarm of maternal stars. All these companions of my time live the same life, drink the same beer, love the same woman, die the same death. I have a number, a day, a birthstone, a climate, favorite dishes, pears for thirst, favorite comings and goings and vices that I do not mix up. I know that I should choose my friends in Cancer or in Scorpio, my mistresses in Virgo, Taurus, or Capricorn. I suspect that everything was foreseen, from the igniter of gas lights who spattered me with old straw every evening when I returned from school,

to late arriving trains, and ushers who await me like sentinels at the turn of weeks and years. All the censors, bus ticket inspectors, suddenly broken down taxi drivers, bibliophile concierges are my traveling companions, just as unexpected rain showers, streets that one can't find, banana peels, and sudden hugs, long desired but no longer counted on, are gifts.

I am pregnant, marked, registered, identified. I have a speedometer in my lungs, a scale in my eye, a calendar in my ear, a Michelin map beneath the soles of my feet, mirrors, atlases, key rings, stopwatches all over my body. When I get up, I clock in before starting life, like a good worker. But if I work overtime, no one tells me to clock out. I have twelve thousand senses, wharves of ideas, colonies of feelings, a memory of three million hectares. And I know a lot more.

Like the traveler who paces in the corridor of a train car as it glides into the landscape like a jointer plane, my destiny moves within me, and yet it submits to me. It obeys me. When it runs riot, I restrain it; when it falls asleep, I prod it awake. It believes it is much stronger than me and taunts me, choosing its moment, for example that step between waking and sleeping over which we always stumble. It's then that I generally see it, a bit precious, a bit aristocratic, its eye clouded and cosmic, brain-colored, agitated like a typhoon, restless, worrying, a sort of Gargantua in sailcloth, not quite dreamy, nor entirely threatening,

enormous and supple, so immense that it occupies my entire sky, as heavy as sleep, as elusive as a fistful of water, as the presence of a cataract, as an ocean hypocrisy.

And in the morning, when I feel a bit childish, all covered in goose bumps and shivering with indecision, my destiny enters me like a hunger, one of those hunger pangs that suddenly fractures your belly, that works you like a strongbox. I see it and I do not see it: it is part shroud and part migraine, it has a voice that is perhaps mine and perhaps its own, the distant voice of a damaged telephone that gives me grandmother and thug advice, and which I listen to ... I swim in it and it swims in me. Pisces.

When I feel that it has settled in me, when we are entwined like those wrestlers to whom everything is allowed and who take advantage of that to return to the navel through the ear, when I descend into it and it descends into me, and when with the round airs of an elastic sphere it guides my affairs, this Fomalhaut begins by lecturing me, and with such high-mindedness that I blunder out of the spirit of contradiction. Fate is a hurricane in a bottle, fermenting in a sternum. A zodiacal sign, the Sign, Yours, the one whose stray bullet you are on earth, is a tidal wave that capsizes you.

Mine is noble. It has a coat of arms in the shape of a fortified boxfish, astonishingly hirsute, bristling

with spikes like the Iron Maiden of Cologne. It is the color of an aquarium, full like a country moon, yellow above ponds of blood. It exists more than I do: eternal, well founded, just for all those who have been tangents to it, like a recruiting office. Like those men who have seen once or ten times, who have perhaps even spoken once or ten times, to some milkmaid or Begum, to some cat, to some cousin or sister, and who believed they had rights over her, my fate arrogates rights over me. All my life, therefore, I must have my blood decanted, buy amethysts, write on amethysts, put pieces of amethyst under the feet of rickety tables, and hover in the diaphaneity, and show a predilection for brown? So my book spines will be chestnut, my pupils berry, my socks golden brown, my enemies chocolate, my friends the color of Havana, my mistresses gilded, my maids *café au lait*. I will be the great swarthy native from chestnut boulevards, the brunet guy in the hazelnut pullover who only shows up in the grey hours of the brown and gritty districts to frighten and harm the brûléed whores. And, on top of it all, who will be marooned! All my life?

— All my life, says the Monster.

My uncle had given me a stone for a sledgehammer, an ice-stone, a corundum, a pretty, astringent, and monotone ring that for a long time had served as my comrade. Upon inquiry, it was not my uncle.

That piece of alum, the color of sperm and lettuce, had fallen from the sky to us on a Monday, like an aerolith. No matter how many times we lost it, it found itself again; and when we found it, we lost it again. How many times had I lost my temper against this eye, against this dream debris with its laboratory odor that no sole could reduce to powder, against that kernel of a nebula. Nothing to do, it was fate!

All my life?

— All my life, replied the Southern Hemisphere.

When I go down to the hotel, I try to take room 11. I leave my house at 11 o'clock. I give 11 francs to the ghosts. I bet on 11. I have 11 friends and 11 enemies. I count up to 11.

Finally, it is the 11th hour, before number 11 on 11th street, starting from the Seine, that the 11th chick in a row whispers to me and my 11, taking me for a bonze, in her voice of bronze:

— Hey! said the beautiful blonze. "Come and I'll make you the apoplectic albinonze ..."

A hundred times, I've had the desire to be Aries, Cancer, Aquarius. But then, it would be 13, platinum, daffodil, sweet caporal, coq au vin, suburb. Often, after having despaired of being a man, and free, possessing a hand sans lines, a sky sans stars, as useless on the skin of the planet as an air current, a good word, I dreamed of another zodiac. Of a zodiac that would not force me to marry twice, to introduce

myself as a radical-emphysematous deputy in the Trois-Sèvres, to clean my clothes with histogenol or to contract laryngitis when passing before the $ax^2 + bx + c$ agency of the Crédit Lyonnais. Quick, more algebra, fewer predictable alopecias, women without predestination and new dreams under dismantling skies! A zodiac that would be a lemon-press, a fascist, a tax collector, a black tulip, a wackadoo, a philharmonic society for sulfurous baths of railway capitalism. Enough of celestial telegrams, military booklets for single men, extra-stellar passports!

Fortunately, I escape this gathering of souls. No matter how many intellectual symptoms are found in my fingerprints, poetry filings on my envelopes, I remain without past or future. I have no hollows anywhere. I want no other shadow on the ground than the one projected by my wounded tenderness. I am not a naked number on a roulette wheel, and I turn as I please, always infinitely available. My destiny, it's the effort of every night toward myself. It's the return to the heart, with slow steps, along cities enslaved to the bureaucracy of mystery... What does it matter to me to have been born, to have died, to have one hundred years of hair, predispositions for the merchant marines, a measure of the spirit of contradiction, and faithful women in other people's beds? What does it matter to me that I have my place in this world, which I know for having made it? I am

one of those who sow fate, who have discovered the cloakroom before venturing into life itself. I arrived completely naked, free of cosmic tattoos. The gentle giant that bothers me when I still feel deboned by sleep is the Universe that I created for myself, which keeps me warm in my dreams. And if I die tomorrow, it will be from an attack of disobedience.

Paris

The first time that I saw, under the sapwood of Paris, that I really saw, like a true damned one, Hell and Heaven in mobs of men and old women, the first time that we looked into each other's eyes, it was, I believe, a night of vague rioting. I was having an aperitif in a genial little bar, not far from Rue de Lancry, in a sort of cul-de-sac as greasy as the bottom of a frying pan, and which snaked with the smirks of a distinguished tributary toward Boulevard Magenta.

I didn't know the dead end, but I knew the neighborhood, its stench, its cats entangled in carapaces, like insects, its large blackish crepes that the man kneads on the sidewalk with his foot, mixing under his weight carrots, lettuce, corpses, and dark heels of bread. A taxi had sometimes taken me through these sooty trenches. Yet I had never touched anyone's hand there before. So, one uproarious night, I was there.

In the distance, a kind of soft sparkle, barely perceptible and more like a sulk, was born. None of those who weighed their elbows on the zinc bar-top of the café had heard of any anger in the city. And yet, a strange apprehension crept into us. The bent backs, the oozing necks, the bustle of hands and eyelids, the rubbing of feet on the ground, everything made me think of the specific fears, of the eternal

attitudes of the populations that live in the shadow of volcanoes. The day before an eruption causes short fevers and bursts of granules to run over their skin. Invisible sarabands gallop at the level of kneeling fields. Mustard columns are diluted in the green sky. Then, at the first gasp of the boiling mountain, the earth retracts, man flees bent in two, flowers break, cattle whirl round.

Nothing like this in the secret marshes of the 10th arrondissement. We know that a fire will not suddenly spring from the chest of Paris, like a torrid rainbow. On our lands digested by the electoral bacillus, the cataclysm itself is reduced to mediocre proportions. Only a few young banking philosophers, a few privileged sons who went thru life bandaged with diplomas, like those traveling in a berth, find in the colics of the capital Kantian flavors and pre-Columbian jolts. That can be read in their difficult journals; it is detailed in the drawing-rooms where we get together, and Madame de Saint-Céromage immediately believes in causes, in malaise; she jumps toward the beardless, sad minister, an Ecole Normalian in his spare time, and applies cupping glasses and leeches, makes him bleed in haste to know what *the right to work* and *two-tier syndicalism* are. And the other goes with his unctuous words, which he scatters to the four corners of the room. Bigots with mouths deprived of margins, slender

Jews, sweetened with the powder of Rachel, nod with their eyes in the shape of stink bombs. Toreadors in tuxedos, mixed up with Zambezi moralists and sheet-metal workers from Greenland let interpreters know that they got it. The study of the Revolution is also part of their snobbism — we talk about it among crocodiles, penguins, icebergs, nuggets, and giant seeds.

No pedants, in the neighborhoods devoid of nurses and crews. Analysis never risks it, not because it would be reluctant to practice it, but because the men there have a certain dignity. What is athletic is athletic, what is red is red. I had gone to see a cousin, an old cousin who was dying in a fifth floor apartment, who stood behind life, like a trademark on the back of a plate. He seemed happy to be leaving, and told me that he had climbed to the top of the stairs just like anyone else. A relative had given us biscuits, had made them enter into our murmurs. Outside, it was raining glaucos dust. We had sorted out common memories. Then I groped my way downward, swimming down a flight of stairs where aquarium moss wrapped itself around the trunks of the banister. The odor of dark gardens, shy cabbages, hidden soles, and itchy children stirred at the bottom of the shadowy mud. Sometimes, polished doors opened, like surprises at my foreign footsteps, and I saw, ranged around normal tables, pious, thrifty, and well-

nourished families. No poetic force seemed to be acting upon them. The patriarch was reading, robust and quiet, walking his fork under the appropriate cheek. The mother was on underwear duty. The children all had one limb asleep. For me, it was a grave opening, happy and well-painted. These people went to life as others go to death. Their heroism isn't known. And yet, they are soldiers. The bell ringing of the gasman, the Inspector General of Elections, or the worldly step of the Lady-Who-Comes-for-Good-Works, makes them stand at attention. In this environment, people respect the uniforms of the Republic.

Higher up, single women, the Eugénie Grandets of the bal-musette, the Carthusians of la Cloche, dreamed, their flesh heavy, the stockings giving way, of dashing soldiers from the cinema. These still young old girls are the aristocracy of the place: what they save goes to Permanente, cotton wool, toothpaste. They snub the concierge and sing out of tune, taunting the neighbors with songs heard outside neighborhood limits and that will not hit the street till a bit later.

In that swarm of dramatic naiveties and virtues, God circulated, a black God, but one who remembered having been Santa Claus. The ghosts had lined up in single file along the steps eaten by tides of feet. And God passed, monotonously, pausing for a moment before the closed doors, as if he wanted to

breathe some white hope, a few grams of white hope to the sleeping ones, to the poor who waited for the Lord all night long with their mouths open. I went up and down again. But what floors, what latches, what hinges, from the thin, cold hand of my quivering cousin! Tall houses in poor neighborhoods, tall columns of distress, infinite distances to the heavens. I think of the calls that rise every night from these pits, from these basements full of eyelids and hearts surging toward the sky, like rockets. A Sabbath of genuflexions, supplications, geysers of desires and dreams bloom toward Heaven. Then, the bodies of these humans without a cube of air, human rights ... What tuberculosis patient, rent like a bow, will put out the lights at night?

I approach the thin doors. The clutter of life reaches me. Here, the maker of children, arming himself with his pale and hooked Thomas Diafoirus feet, impales a poltroon who has long confused pleasure with bronchitis. There, the squeals of kids echo in a large family geology. We squeeze into the narrow dining rooms: the bicycle is in a drawer, with hairpins, a deck of cards, a green sheet from the tax office, and an appointment calendar. A radio set, shaped like a box and mistuned, screeches. Fingers covered with frostbite set up an alarm clock looking like a sick child's head. At the bottom of this piggy bank lies a pair of concierges, a two-sex divinity who adds to

his functions, in these neighborhoods, the obligation of playing the part of the police. Statisticians are informed that the blonde on the 5th floor works the brothels on Avenue de Wagram; that the plumber on staircase A, at the end of the courtyard, frequents clubs; that a sad old lady lives quietly behind her windows, doing nothing, receiving no mail; that the old man who played the flute died strangely, screaming, one November night, and that the whole street was at his funeral. Fearsome as trench cannons, the trashcans adorn the edge of the house, slowly being forgotten under the vault, through a faulty hole.

I throw myself into the street, into this beneficent water that dozes between banks with windows. Fresh water from a street in Paris where one mingles with reflections, water purer than in any city in the world, comforting water, a miraculous spring, from which emits a mixture of courage and hope. I enter a shady café. Two young folks drink from the same glass: one in overalls, one in a bodice, laughter. He, the common man from Larousse, a widespread type, without originality, without value: a good mechanic from the village with hard hands and dog white teeth. But her, the Fleur de Marie ...

Drinkers on benches were thinking with all their might. Among the poor, pleasure is enjoyed sitting down. Freedom arises like those big flies with their nielléd behinds. On the walls, military images remind

the audience of prestige and ceremonies. Whether they are patriotic or unruly, parliamentary or bloody, it doesn't matter. There are some. There are always games. The paintings that sometimes represent the aperitif bottle and sometimes the bunch of French grapes play the role of museum canvases. A poem about the *bat'd'Af'* rose from all that like the strong smell of a soup. A few lively replies went from four to five mouths at a time to appreciate the things of the day, the sport of the moment. We were among clear, well spread out consciences, served without bones. The boss had an eye to sharing his sausage with the first comer. Choirs of tiny insects sheared through the glasswork gardens. The charm of cheap living spread, emitted with smiles, glares, blows of the tongue and jets of saliva.

I had the feeling that I was in a tent pitched by nomads, in a tent that a sort of hereditary approval of poor devils stretched to the limits of a country, and I saw love, usury, loneliness, conspiracy, debauchery and fury in it. But like a showcase of objects. Barrès, who is often admirable, is amusing, and with him intellectual tourists, who see, beyond certain frontiers, only the prostitutes of external boulevards and the scaffolds of fortifications. Likewise, the population of places sans florists and homeopathic pharmacies see, starting from the Champs-Élysées, only Tyrants & Crœsus. We find in *Du Sang, de la Volupté et de la*

Mort, a beautiful book, but a very refined diary, this surprising note: "Strange, unwelcome young boys, with unexpected and rapid gestures, simulated Father Francis among themselves; poor little sick girls, obscene and nightmarishly elegant, grouped in pairs, in fours, around a bowl of mulled wine." Everything, except the bowl of mulled wine, which is there like a Negro statue at the veterinarian's, everything in this piece, is of a perverse aquarellist. For me, who knows Paris better than the postmen, nothing can look less like an Apache than an Apache, and I absolutely cannot define a streetwalker ... Classes ignore each other, men never see one other, families still live like tribes, with their superstitions, their mythologies, their fears.

I sat close to the couple. The siren laughed like a fruit, and seemed devastated. There is no aristocracy but the youth of women. They are naked in a crowded world. We understand that psychologists and songwriters of cheap sentimentality have made enigmas of them. My neighbor had a laugh that came from the depths of centuries, and a simplicity of gestures that linked her to the Mother of Women. The old men who were there gazed at her with the look of men who let their time pass.

And the man, who was barely the master of his impatient hands, rose by arpeggios toward spheres where his dark dreams sparkled. He felt splendor,

strength, vertigo. He was walking like a Resurrected Man in a strange ether. He suddenly saw Museum frescoes flit through his ramified & sensitive head. He came face to face with his double at the summit of whirling planets. He heard postcard stands tilt toward his immense ears. He was dying on the battlefield, distraught, thin and transparent as in a nightmare, very small & endless, and as he saw himself in the purple stars of drunkenness with his buddies. A woman is there. One woman, one system, and so simple, so round! I watched him run across her and without believing it — because, as the fellow says, one must be rich in order to have sensations, — to step over, with a little shame, other existences, the previous, the future, the imaginary, and the damned. And the woman modestly, somewhat stupidly, enjoyed these lurches, which they all provoke without doing it on purpose.

Outside, according to reports, people were getting angry about oppression. The evening papers passed through the street like comets. It was said that the bouillabaisse of the Republican Guards descended on the slopes of the arrondissements in roller coasters. Tripe sellers, leather workers in their rooms, girls at the windows, with heavy and cold legs, card shooters, toothpick bureaucrats, hair-scratchers and follow-me-young-man madams, Czech vendors, Saar emigrants, bank clerks, all the creeping vegetation

of the houses of Paris rushed in fragments of bodies toward the sky, or plunged into streams. All the ideas of the neighborhood had suddenly been eaten up like pillows. We had nothing left in our hearts. So, what? Was the world about to end? Had we found Stavisky? Would there never again be high literature, poetry, cinema? In the distance, the famous statues moved like poplars. All of Paris grimaced. The avenues, the boulevards, the crossroads, the alleys mobilized their passersby and their vermin. They poured full buckets of mirages into the sky. Generals were exploding like firecrackers. Everything went up. One was lifted up on his chair, on his wife, on his ideas. The din of a thousand simultaneous moves ricocheted from arrondissement to arrondissement. Paris, the city sung of in all the casinos of the world, Paris, the city of women, Paris, the city of perfumes, was no more than an ant-hill bungled by the wooden shoe of a cowherd. The drinkers and I felt suffocating epidemics coming upon us. A gentleman-rider was about to take power. We would drink the blood of the victims. And then, we would start again, class after class. The next four would have *sous*, public squares, well-washed chickens, pedestal tables and marble objects. We would put up other posters; we would transform the Vespasians. Religion would become gymnastic and gymnastics religion, but in such a brusque and perfect way, the seams would barely be

seen, the scars would be so well-effaced that nobody would be sensitive to the change ...

And then, little by little, the derailment was averted; the curious returned to their shells; the street fell back on its feet. We all found ourselves in the café, stupid, content, proud to see each other in the flesh, friends as before. Alone, the two young people had crossed the equator without noticing it. For them alone, hours had passed. The upheavals hadn't reached them. They were wise and passionate like characters in paintings. They saw everything in white. They climbed unsullied floors, they picked fruit, trampled on ravishing serpents, possessed themselves, twisted in a mirage. They were but cosmic dust: out of space, absent, eternal, and so strange, so comical, so barbaric in that display of glasses, spirits, and mouths ... They lived; we were dead. They galloped in the divine, while we were preoccupied with revolutions. And, in this Paris for a day, I was able to extend my antenna to the marvelous stupidities of two monsters from the Infinite. I have always envied those who prowl beyond the Unknown, who are only eternal combinations ...

... Yet, Paradise was nothing else, before these glacial times when man was dying to carve the stone, when woman was trying to carve out love. Paradise, I hear it above the roof of the city ... And I sense there great landscapes with staggered planes, filled

with living things of all kinds, such as have populated Breughel and Bosch. Everywhere, arabesques of women and children around singers and scrubbers, floating lines of knotted hands, flights of caressing eyes. Landings, embankments, medians, half-moons, rotundas, fumivores and carriages loaded with human grapeshot. The stampedes rustle for a long time. Cheerful reptiles of young girls glide into the embroidered countryside. Stairs, steep paths rise under hundred-year-old trees, engraved with names, hearts, and slogans. Train tracks smoke their steam toward the ever-changing identical sky. Steep paths, covered with velvet, lead lovers toward their mirages. Everywhere, gods, dogs, transparent animals jump and dive, make the gravel of fairy tales spring up and shine, heartily kicking their legs, making children stumble, not a cry of which can be heard ...

... And then, cheerful or melancholy, confident, isolated in cool courtyards, in gardens, as before as everywhere, as much later as today, in this Paris and in these terrible and treacherous suburbs, in this corner of living-dead men, always lovers, laughing, quarrelsome, united, entwined on doorsteps, imploring, bearing secrets that other paradises have never exhausted, murderers, gentle, so gentle, we others, with the most tender attitudes, dreaming of the arms of the Kanéphoros, of the arms around the neck ...

Acknowledgements

To translate Léon-Paul Fargue is considerably challenging, akin perhaps to engaging in a kind of acrobatic act which, aside from being bold, is to some degree even perilous. If you don't think so, well, *in the beginning was the word*... These things can give birth to worlds, even if one doesn't believe in spectres. The task was to let Fargue manifest and take possession of me and arise anew in the mask of English. If I appear anywhere, *tant pis* for this slippage.

At the end of this shamanic high wire act, I was aided by the better eyes of a few companions, including Gregory Flanders, Pierre Joris, and, at the final hour, Pierre Senges, whose acumen clarified a few Rabelasian, quasi-surrealist, Jabberwockian passages. I am grateful to each of them, but it is to Peter Thompson to whom I owe the greatest debt, for his precise, thorough, and extensive observations, sometimes down to the most atomic of details. Although I fell from the rope a number of times, this translation is infinitely superior due to their eyes.

To close, I wish to extend my gratitude to Robert & Olivia Temple and The Montparnasse Cultural Foundation for their support, as well as for the even greater gift of their unparalleled patience. At last, the fated moment for this aperitif, *truite au bleu*, and so much more, has arrived. Before it, may you be like *l'homme foudroyé*.

COLOPHON



HIGH SOLITUDE
was handset in InDesign CC.

The text font is *JAF Lapture*.

The display font is *Curve*.

Book design & typesetting: Alessandro Segalini

Cover design: CMP

Image credit: Jacques Callot & Melchior Tavernier,
Le plan de la ville, cité université, fauxbourgs de Paris,
avec la description de son antiquité (1630).

HIGH SOLITUDE
is published by Contra Mundum Press.



Contra Mundum Press New York · London · Melbourne

CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS

Dedicated to the value & the indispensable importance of the individual voice, to works that test the boundaries of thought & experience.

The primary aim of Contra Mundum is to publish translations of writers who in their use of form and style are *à rebours*, or who deviate significantly from more programmatic & spurious forms of experimentation. Such writing attests to the volatile nature of modernism. Our preference is for works that have not yet been translated into English, are out of print, or are poorly translated, for writers whose thinking & aesthetics are in opposition to timely or mainstream currents of thought, value systems, or moralities. We also reprint obscure and out-of-print works we consider significant but which have been forgotten, neglected, or overshadowed.

There are many works of fundamental significance to *Weltliteratur* (& *Weltkultur*) that still remain in relative oblivion, works that alter and disrupt standard circuits of thought — these warrant being encountered by the world at large. It is our aim to render them more visible.

For the complete list of forthcoming publications, please visit our website. To be added to our mailing list, send your name and email address to: info@contramundum.net



Contra Mundum Press
P.O. Box 1326
New York, NY 10276
USA

OTHER CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS TITLES

- 2012 *Gilgamesh*
 Ghérasim Luca, *Self-Shadowing Prey*
 Rainer J. Hanshe, *The Abdication*
 Walter Jackson Bate, *Negative Capability*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Marginalia on Casanova*
 Fernando Pessoa, *Philosophical Essays*
- 2013 Elio Petri, *Writings on Cinema & Life*
 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Greek Music Drama*
 Richard Foreman, *Plays with Films*
 Louis-Auguste Blanqui, *Eternity by the Stars*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor*
 Josef Winkler, *When the Time Comes*
- 2014 William Wordsworth, *Fragments*
 Josef Winkler, *Natura Morta*
 Fernando Pessoa, *The Transformation Book*
 Emilio Villa, *The Selected Poetry of Emilio Villa*
 Robert Kelly, *A Voice Full of Cities*
 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *The Divine Mimesis*
 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae, Vol. 1*
- 2015 Federico Fellini, *Making a Film*
 Robert Musil, *Thought Flights*
 Sándor Tar, *Our Street*
 Lorand Gaspar, *Earth Absolute*
 Josef Winkler, *The Graveyard of Bitter Oranges*
 Ferit Edgü, *Noone*
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Narcissus*
 Ahmad Shamlu, *Born Upon the Dark Spear*
- 2016 Jean-Luc Godard, *Phrases*
 Otto Dix, *Letters, Vol. 1*
 Maura Del Serra, *Ladder of Oaths*
 Pierre Senges, *The Major Refutation*
 Charles Baudelaire, *My Heart Laid Bare & Other Texts*
- 2017 Joseph Kessel, *Army of Shadows*
 Rainer J. Hanshe & Federico Gori, *Shattering the Muses*
 Gérard Depardieu, *Innocent*
 Claude Mouchard, *Entangled — Papers! — Notes*

- 2018 Miklós Szentkuthy, *Black Renaissance*
Adonis & Pierre Joris, *Conversations in the Pyrenees*
- 2019 Charles Baudelaire, *Belgium Stripped Bare*
Robert Musil, *Unions*
Iceberg Slim, *Night Train to Sugar Hill*
Marquis de Sade, *Aline & Valcour*
- 2020 *A City Full of Voices: Essays on the Work of Robert Kelly*
Rédoine Faïd, *Outlaw*
Carmelo Bene, *I Appeared to the Madonna*
Paul Celan, *Microliths They Are, Little Stones*
Zsuzsa Selyem, *It's Raining in Moscow*
Bérengère Viennot, *Trumpfpeak*
Robert Musil, *Theater Symptoms*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Chapter on Love*
- 2021 Charles Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*
Marguerite Duras, *The Darkroom*
Andrew Dickos, *Honor Among Thieves*
Pierre Senges, *Ahab (Sequels)*
Carmelo Bene, *Our Lady of the Turks*
- 2022 Fernando Pessoa, *Writings on Art & Poetical Theory*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae, Vol. 2*
Blixa Bargeld, *Europe Crosswise: A Litany*
Pierre Joris, *Always the Many, Never the One*
Robert Musil, *Literature & Politics*
- 2023 Pierre Joris, *Interglacial Narrows*
Gabriele Tinti, *Bleedings — Incipit Tragædia*
Évelyne Grossman, *The Creativity of the Crisis*
Rainer J. Hanshe, *Closing Melodies*
Kari Hukkila, *One Thousand & One*
- 2024 Antonin Artaud, *Journey to Mexico*
Rainer J. Hanshe, *Dionysos Speed*
Amina Saïd, *Walking the Earth*

SOME FORTHCOMING TITLES

- Nuriá Perpinyà, *And, Suddenly, Paradise*
Marquis de Sade, *Stories, Tales, & Fables*

AGRODOLCE SERIES *AD*



- 2020 Dejan Lukić, *The Oyster*
2022 Ugo Tognazzi, *The Injester*

HYPERION

On the Future of Aesthetics

2006–PRESENT

To read samples and order current & back issues of *Hyperion*,
visit contramundumpress.com/hyperion

Edited by Rainer J. Hanshe & Erika Mihálycsa (2014 ~)



CONTRA MUNDUM PRESS

is published by Rainer J. Hanshe

Typography & Design: Alessandro Segalini

Publicity & Marketing: Alexandra Gold

Fundraising & Grant Writing: Madeline Hausmann

Ebook Design: Carlie R. Houser

THE FUTURE OF KULCHUR

THE PROJECT

From major museums like the MoMA to art house cinemas such as Film Forum, cultural organizations do not sustain themselves from sales alone, but from subscriptions, donations, benefactors, and grants.

Since benefactors of Peggy Guggenheim's stature are rare to come by, and receiving large grants from major funding bodies is an infrequent and unreliable source of capital, we seek to further our venture through a form of modest support that is within everyone's reach.

Although esteemed, *Contra Mundum* is an independent boutique press with modest profit margins. In not having university, state, or institutional backing, other forms of sustenance are required to move us into the future.

Additionally, in the past decade, the reduction of the purchasing budgets across the nation of both public and private libraries has had a severe impact upon publishers, leading to significant decreases in sales, thereby necessitating the creation of alternative means of subsistence.

Because many of our books are translations, our desire for proper remuneration is a persistent point of concern. Even when translators receive grants for book projects, the amount is often insufficient to compensate for their efforts, and royalties, which trickle in slowly over years, are not a reliable source of compensation.

WHAT WILL BE DONE

With your participation we seek to offer writers and translators greater compensation for their work, and in a more expeditious manner.

Additionally, funds will be used to pay for translation rights, basic operating expenses of the press, and to represent our writers and translators at book fairs.

If the means exist, we will also create a translation residency, providing opportunities to both junior and more established translators, thereby furthering our cultural efforts.

Through a greater collective and the cultural commons of the world, we can band together to create this constellation and together function as a patron for the writers and artists published by CMP. We hope you will join us in this partnership.

Your patronage is an expression of your confidence and belief in visionary literary work that would otherwise be exiled from the Anglophone world. With bookstores and presses around the world struggling to survive, and many even closing, joining the Future of Kulchur allows you to be a part of an active force that forms a continuous & stable foundation which safeguards the longevity of Contra Mundum Press.

Endowed by your support, we can expand our poetics of hospitality by continuing to publish works from many different languages and reflect, welcome, and embrace the riches of other cultures throughout the world. To become a member of any of our Future of Kulchur tiers is to express your support of such cultural work, and to aid us in continuing it. A unified assemblage of individuals can make a modern Mæcenas and deepen access to radical works.

THE OYSTER (\$2/month)

- Three issues (PDFs) of your choice of our art journal, *Hyperion*.
- 15% discount on all purchases (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$2 a month contributes to the cost to convert a title to an ebook and make it accessible to wider audiences.

PARIS SPLEEN (\$5/month)

- Receive \$35 worth of books or your choice from our back catalog.
- Three issues (PDFs) of your choice of our art journal, *Hyperion*.
- 18% discount on all purchases (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$5 a month contributes to the cost purchasing new fonts for expanding the range of our typesetting palette.

GILGAMESH (\$10/month)

- Receive \$70 worth books of your choice from our back catalog.
- 4 PDF issues of our magazine *Hyperion*.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 20% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Select images of our books as they are being typeset.
- Impact: \$10 a month contributes to the production and publication of *Hyperion*, encouraging critical engagement with art theory & aesthetics and ensuring we can pay our contributors.

THE GREEK MUSIC DRAMA (\$25/month)

- Receive \$215 worth of books.
- 5 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$25 value).
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 25% discount (for orders made directly through our site) on all merchandise during the subscription term (one year).
- Impact: \$25 a month contributes to the cost of designing and formatting a book.

CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION (\$50/month)

- Receive \$525 worth of books.
- 6 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$30 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 30% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- Select one forthcoming book from our catalog and receive it in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$50 a month contributes to editorial & proofreading fees.

CASANOVA (\$100/month)

- Receive \$1040 worth of books.
- 7 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$30 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 35% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- A signed typeset spread from two forthcoming books.
- Select two forthcoming books from our catalog and receive them in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$100 a month contributes to the cost of translating a book, therefore supporting a translator in their craft & bringing a new work & perspective to Anglophone audiences.

CYBERNETOGAMIC VAMPIRE (\$200/month)

- Receive \$2020 worth of books.
- 10 PDF issues of *Hyperion* (\$50 value).
- 1 tote.
- A quarterly newsletter with exclusive content such as interviews with authors or translators, excerpts from upcoming titles, publication news, and more.
- 40% discount on all merchandise (for orders made directly through our site) during the subscription term (one year).
- A signed typeset spread from four of our forthcoming books.
- The listing of your name in the colophon to a forthcoming book of your choice.
- Select four forthcoming books from our catalog and receive them in advance of release to the general public.
- Impact: \$200 a month contributes to general operating expenses of the press, paying for translation rights, and attending book fairs to represent our writers and translators and reach more readers around the world.

To join the Future of Kulchur, visit here:

contramundumpress.com/support-us

Heir of symbolism, father of surrealism, extraordinary verbal inventor, Léon-Paul Fargue reveals himself to be a visionary in his poetic prose. He calls *High Solitude* a “diorama of states of the soul.”

In this work, first published in 1941, Fargue revives both the night of prehistoric times and that of the end of the world. And, between the two, this fantastic universe also: the Paris that he so loved and of which he was the unforgettable *piéton* (walker, stroller). Paris, whose secret geography he traces, in the company of the ghosts of those who were dear to him. The Paris of white nights, train stations, and cafés.

But every road, every street, leads to this high, unique place: *solitude*. “I work at my solitude, searching to guide it in the sea of insomnia where the long line of the dead has thrown us...”

Translated by Rainer J. Hanshe



Contra Mundum Press

ISBN 978-1-940625-70-6



9 781940 625706

CONTRAMUNDUMPRESS.COM