

ADVANCE PRAISE

Once in every century, a work of this caliber arrives. Like Diderot's *D'Alembert's Dream*, or Kafka's "A Report to an Academy," Hanshe's *Humanimality* inverts comedy into tragedy, and vice versa. The result is a visceral breakdown of the word and of the flesh. In a gesture of involuting, as an undoing, the writer here reverses the spell of the civilized homo sapiens. A book as a counter-spell presents itself then (the highest degree of any writing). What remains after this extinguishing of inner terror, one that shaped humans for the past 10,000 years? There are no traces left, only a pure intensity: honest, unforgiving to oneself, unrepentant; an intense line that was always there at the foundation of all chaos and all lies and all truths and all space and all time. That is the line carved in and by *Humanimality*. One can only imagine what price the writer had to pay to incise this intensity. I will venture to say it anyway: a lifetime of abandonment and renunciation; refusal of all conformist sensibilities; reckless focus. No, wrong, it took millions of lifetimes condensed into a crystal of pure and alien (little known) thought procedure. That is to say, through rogue firmness a veritable dissipation of borders between the human and the animal is summoned here. But do not be afraid. This extinguishing is exuberant. For it is tactile, auditory, olfactory. It heightens the senses. As such, it is utterly concrete, bursting with all kinds of material forms. Yet it might also be a dream. A hallucination wrenched from a stupor of enlightenment. Clearly we are beyond the space of literature now. The voices are inhuman and so is the demand to embrace them. A demand devoid of ethics, a demand for a reversal, which leads to the revival (of the earth, at dawn...)" — Dejan Lukic

A cross between a supremely erudite *Planet of the Apes* and a lightning-swift tackle of the great books of Western civilization from the Bible and Ancient Greeks on, Rainer J. Hanshe's *Humanimality* is a biting (often in the literal sense) satire of everything but the cosmos, itself viewed strictly (if exuberantly) as naught but the explosive, untouched energy of the natural universe. A "mortal comedy" setting out to invert Dante's journey and heralding Nietzsche as its guide to a fully grounded, despiritualized realm, this

highly sapient yet vibrant and compelling tale shreds the texts of countless thinkers and writers from Plato to Heidegger, Aeschylus to Blake and Tennyson, no matter their discipline, tribe, or creed. In a stunning array of fragmentary quotations and allusion after allusion, Hanshe savages the world of letters to bits so as to lay bare its part(s) in humanity's auto-destruction – a catastrophe, which, left unchecked, threatens the whole of life on earth. Happily, as befits a comedy, "all" ends well. A marvelous companion piece to the author's *Dionysos Speed*, which carried readers on a dizzying jaunt through the deathly digi-sphere we're heading toward, this new philosophical novel previews the splendid primeval world we might return to, by forcefully reminding us whence and how far we've come. But do not expect any ancient or newfangled pieties here – physics reigns alone and only the better to perceive chaos –, for this work's assault on all lofty humanistic endeavors also engulfs itself, deploying and challenging, most learnedly, all varieties of long-tested thought and invention and the precision of an astonishing wealth of instructive, edifying words. Writing with keen poetic and incantatory powers, Hanshe creates a book bound to be doomed by its own rowdy logic, insofar as it is at once frightening, informative, amusing, and lyrical. *Humanimity* is a salty song that leaves higher beings merely laughing while gazing at the stars, consigning all gloomy ink-recorded "drop(s) of nothingness" – as Mallarmé once depicted human consciousness – safely back to sea.

– Mary Lewis Shaw, author of *The Cambridge Introduction to French Poetry and Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé: The Passage from Art to Ritual*