

DOWNLOAD PDF THE YALE ANTHOLOGY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH POETRY

Chapter 1 : The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry by Mary Ann Caws

Here for the first time is a comprehensive bilingual representation of French poetic achievement in the twentieth century, from the turn-of-the-century poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire to the high modernist art of Samuel Beckett to the contemporary verse of scourge Michel Houellebecq.

Edited by Mary Ann Caws. Yale University Press, Now that the mighty twentieth century is done and dusted, it is natural to hope that publishers will start to fork out for big, definitive anthologies for the benefit of genre histories and area studies everywhere. This large-scale Yale anthology of French poetry is an indication that publishers think similarly. Unfortunately, such is the bulk of material written, published, and praised in the years in question that it would be foolish to expect just pages to do even a half-decent job. Yale went out on a limb somewhat in choosing Mary Ann Caws as editor for the project, given her strong bias in favour of a particular brand of poetry, but this turns out to be a sage and savvy decision on their part. A proper anthology of twentieth-century French poetry has to have bias, lots of it, so that at least one corner of the field is given the kind of coverage it deserves, and which students presumably the main target here need. The selection criteria throw up fascinating material, not just automatic-writing Freudian gobbledegook of the furry teacup kind, but still as though this were an anthology conjured up at table tournante to the dictates of the shade of Breton. The anthology is quite simply extraordinarily useful as a compendium of the surrealist tradition. But they appear, by implication, as a necessary, if begrudged, context to what Caws clearly sees as the real story. The book is not only an anthology of poetry, of course, but an anthology of translations. Each poem is Englished on the facing page. And with a project of this envergure, it is not surprising that what we get on the English side of the page ishit and miss – happily, more hit than miss. To minimize the misses, Caws wisely stuck, when she could, to a tried and trusted team of acquaintances for the majority of the translations, reliable and inventive people like Rosmarie and Keith Waldrop, Stephen Romer, Rosemary [End Page] Lloyd, Martin Sorrell, Marilyn Hacker, and Hoyt Rogers. And the sheer bulk of the book, its range and, may one say, its cool is a welcome breath of fresh air after too many rather earnest anthologies. Only a very fine poet would really risk taking the task on, though – it is a devil of a poem to translate – but thank the Lord that Derek Mahon decided to do so. The rendering is simply miraculous. But even as fruit consumes itself in taste, even as it translates its own demise deliciously in the mouth where its form dies, I sniff already my own future smoke while light sings to the ashen soul the quick change starting now on the murmuring coast. This is no imitation, however. This is real translation, of an order rarely seen more than a few times in a generation. Bitume et roses, don du chant! Roses and bitumen, gift of song, thunder and fluting in the rooms. With consistent quality like this, Yale and Caws are backing a winner: Or rather English might need the changes of translation from this particular language more than from any other – as was the case once upon a time with the thirst for translation from Latin and Greek. These are such essential texts – not good or bad, but necessary. Translation is there to remind us of such necessities of life, and for that Yale and Mary Ann Caws are to be congratulated. There are some caveats to be entered, just as necessarily. There are no composition dates for the individual poems, which is lazy. A great many of the mini-introductions Caws has written for each poet seem to have been cobbled together from the internet in great haste. The Beckett headnote, for instance, is a disgrace. The following is in the flowing; the self is in the Sinatra assertion turned fluid, pure process. Other potted biographies are just as footling, with extraordinarily empty stress on who was friends with whom. The Picasso introduction fails to mention his communism. There are difficulties with some of the translations too – again as a result of haste, and corners being cut in a vast project. This would be petty cavilling if it did not raise the problem of translating very difficult surrealist material. When the poem is densely allusive but not rationally structured, it can be something of a gamble to get the sense right. Even with the incomparable Breton, Caws can encounter stumbling blocks. Carnation in French means a deep flush in the skin. The randomness and the metaphysicality can create crossed wires, though, especially in the leap across the Sleeve.

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How to render this, for instance: Similarly, it is the curve of chandeliers and feathers which is being called upon, not straight metaphor. But the choice of this kind of poetry, surrealist, edgy, difficult, inevitably exacts a price, and for the most part Caws does a sterling job. My only difficulty with the choice of poets comes in the last section of the volume "when the editor has to choose the poets she thinks will hit the big time. Marilyn Hacker is also convincing in her advocacy of Guy Goffette. Otherwise the poets seem all of the same narrow type" young and pretentious acolytes of Bernstein and Ashbery. I would wager that the real poets are not in the pockets of powerful American mentors, but under all our noses, being extremely French. The real test of a book like this is not its overt thesis that Breton is twentieth-century poetry, that there are a lot of interesting women out there, that Franco-American relations are generating French poets, nor even the quality of the poetry, but the overall impression it gives of the strength and vitality of French verse over these extraordinary, difficult years. For me, the shape of the century was importantly about surrealism, as Caws proves; but surrealism as a weird, uncanny predictor of the violence and random death and horror of the Second World War. The best of the poets, like Char, fought the enemy on their own ground, which included the territory of the poem "and some, like Desnos, fell victim to the evil, but not before leaving a legacy which would redeem the grounds of the very possibility of a free poetry.

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Chapter 2 : Faculty Book: Mary Ann Caws, editor

The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.

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Chapter 3 : Project MUSE - The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry (review)

This work, published as part of a program of aid for publication, received support from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States. The Florence Gould Foundation provided additional funding for the publication of this work.

Chapter 4 : Surrealist Poetry: An Anthology: Willard Bohn: Bloomsbury Academic

These minor inconveniences aside, this is an excellent introduction to the poetry of the Symbolists and an effective introduction for the twentieth century and its poetry, as represented in The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry.

Chapter 5 : Top shelves for The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry

Not since the publication of Paul Auster's The Random House Book of 20th Century French Poetry () has there been a significant and widely read anthology of modern French poetry in the English-speaking world. Here for the first time is a comprehensive bilingual representation of French poetic.