

Michel Bulteau

Crystals to Aden

translated from the French
by Pierre Joris

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MICHEL BULTEAU

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THE CRYSTALS OF MADNESS

Mornings hung from the wrinkles of frozen stars.

Hooks from slat.

Verom from lips' spray.

The cathedral-eyes of the complaint-fairies.

Without palms' coffin's brace.

THE SNOW OF THE BELLY BUTTON PALACES.

At the eternal sun of the mirror's base.

Crystals to Aden

Pale the skin of the tears

Chat-delicier-ooze.

The spheres of a tongue-blood

of the sky-Times

Razor of the word-Skulls

Moon on the pitched embroideries

On the Mages' crimes

Broken musk

Empties the Green Soul

Cradles of smoke-hoys

Yet the mouth is nothing but an iron step

THE CRYSTALS OF MADNESS

Mornings hung from the wrinkles of frozen stars.

Hooks from afar.

Venom from lips' spray.

The cathedral-eyes of the complaint-fairies.

Without psalms' coffin's brake.

THE SNOW OF THE BELLY BUTTON PALACES.

At the eternal satin of the mirror's bone.

Pale the skin of the tears

Chandelier-trees

The spheres of a tongue-blood

of the sky-Times

Razor of the word-Skulls

Moon on the pitched embroideries

On the Manes' crimes

Broken musk

Empties the Green Soul

Cradles of smoke-holes

Yet the mouth is nothing but an iron step

The throat scalp

Child of the Freed Staircase

The Silver Remedies

Haircloths asleep under the Capes

And the nests of the Pearled Stoles

Mornings hung from the wrinkles of frozen stars

Hooks from stars

Venom from lips' spray

The cathedral-eyes of the complainant

Without passion, coffin's bark

THE SNOW OF THE BELLY BUTTON PALACES

At the central stain of the spirit's bone



Take the skin of the stars

Chandelier-eyes

The spheres of a tongue-blood

of the sky-Times

Razor of the word-Skulls

Moon on the pitched embolisms

On the Mass' crown

Broken mask

Empires the Green soul

Cardiac of smoke-holes

Yet the mouth is nothing but an iron trap



WATCRIS88WORDS

NEEDLE
OF
ANNIHILATION

Fluorescent amaranth of the veins.

I am clenched over my eyes of sand-film.

Christ on the star of chimney-cedillas.

THE DIAMOND
NEEDLE
OF
ANNIHILATION

The mouth, canopy of fear, lucid bones, blood at the high cloud said of tears. The freeze-thermometer discards the gestures' oppressed shroud. Agony of a broken halo. Night against the immaculateness of tides, puts the bites of omitted candles to sleep.

Slanted volcano of respirations. The water dies under the internal daggers. The silk bombs, outdoor hangings an incandescent fall.

The Flying Diamond piercing the empty shiver of the body rings.

Neither the universe and a fever without sky, dawn robes, and a blood suspended between shards of mouth and drifts of death. The strangled glove of the tongue.

Orange shadow of nerves, the belly-button death bezelled with a bitten dew. The temples of the pupils, the violin tongues. The magnetized age-rings of the mixing arteries.

Moist lightning bolt, amphetamine communion wafer, blood saw at the consummated perforation of the vein. Saucers dressed in chilled deliriums, here under the skin's skin. Other worlds in front of the aquarium eyes.

The eternal murmur of a scissor perfume.

he has lit candles
on my head
and has changed the color of my breast
I no longer complain
that I am suffering
I am the madman
of the city's congested alleys
the one for whose summer repeats

On the Pacific of my distress. The waves explode like the blue veins of deficiency.
The soda of my blood.

The sand, jewel-case of my wrists.

My eyes along the waves' lashes.

On the embroidered sheets, my childhood asleep in a jade cradle.

The beach sliced by the rainbow's razor. Sword carpets of my necklaces
without Immobile.

My mirror sad mirror, the ocean. To melt my wrists raised with divine
fogs at the Chateau of Malady. The casket where the Anterior made up my fairy
face.

SANA'A

City with its dreams
gathered on its top floors
city with its women
veiled like golden eggs,
no bridge of iron
no coal, no smoke,
jewels of calm
dust,
no basement on fire
caravansaries
where one can dig tunnels
in the café,
the city is there:
a colossal haunting.
I am its visitor,
greedy and shady
I know that the gazes
are gates that open,
I know that the scales
are also made
to weigh contagion,
I was able to observe her
sitting on a box
on black wheat shadow.
Here I am no longer afraid of rats
I know they stayed behind
in the West.
I don't feel unwanted
around these poor tables
where one eats rice with one's fingers.
The one who has nothing
sculpts my skull

he has lit candles
on my head
and has changed the color of my brain!
I no longer complain
that I am suffering,
I am the madman
of the city's congested alleys
the one for whom summer repeats
that one must never conclude.
Here death rests
in the gardens,
and the infinite is not for unhappiness.
Paths of goss
climb up along the house,
the chimeras freak
in the burning air.
I work on the new dead
I circle the street stalls
I believe in the Old World
at the end of the Old World
with its Edens
its generosity
its fateful faraway

30 March 1993

LITTLE ENGINE OF ARABIA

little engine of Arabia

it is not your discontent

that you tell the palm trees

it is not your worries

that you try to make them share

Little engine of Arabia

simply

when you find the earth too dry

you make your voice heard

Little engine

it was at day break in Mar'ib

you wanted to wake up Balkis

Little calm engine of Arabia

you force the spirits to wait in line

you put the mountains

back in their place

you compose ghazals

in the honor of trucker-sultans

Little engine

I am not poking fun at you

Little engine

I should hate you

the builders of alabaster-roofed palaces

did not know your heartbeat

Little engine

you take advantage of it

you don't want me to think

of the imam collector of green windows

In this café in Aden the ceiling fans stir the heated
discussion,
this blue-tiled café
where the young Abyssinians eat modern art ice creams.
The young man at my table puts down his keys,
he cut his left cheek shaving this morning.
Aden, blighted harbor, overtaken by Hodeida,
red chair rest with holes,
here I don't feel that Aden lost the war,
the name of Allah resounds while I walk along the tired
colonial houses,
the cars lean painfully,
what can vain words do faced with the superb refuse of
Aden?

Aden where the ravens shake their heads and the heads
don't fall off.

Aden accepts no theory.
She doesn't ask you to repeat to her that she is never
wrong.

The cars circle the black mountain, disappearing like the
words of the end.

Giant fingers pass before my eyes,
ancient smokers, braggarts slumped in armchairs, fingers
tapping the armrests,
the yellow cabs of Aden carry away my ennui blown up to
35 mm.

Arms' traffic under the dead water of summer,
dated from the time of my anger, an anger I can't even
appease in a mosque.

Wrong way of slowness, blue passage, with, as precaution:
not to leave one's dead body in the *love letters*,

the camels are sitting in the stink like images of heat,
in the reservoirs of Aden two adolescents naked to the waist
are striking Kung Fu poses,

here paper gets dirty quickly, a bit more torn
than the intellectuals of the circular Occident,
in a street without empty bellies, the aerial men have
lost the blue Card,

they have no lids left to protect them against
the inhospitality of remarks and coincidences,
that here dare enter the prone women, halos bitten by
dogs,

polished shoes of the translators who no longer have a
refuge,

you lead me, your treatise on punctuation in hand,
you lead me to the center of the others,

you lead me,
we have toured all of Aden,

how to tell you?
no longer love the sweet simperings,

love nobody,

love,

but yes

love the sharp angles, the sorcerers who no longer
know how to speak,

war, you have put away your planes, your machine
guns, your illiterate soldiers with their bird-shit colored shirts,

Aden, they have ransacked you, you who had no
innocence left.

Aden

14, 15, 16 November 1994

YOUR DAMN EXILE

Burning of cold calls
Urn of sand and blood
New rope around
the stormy nights

My prince, I sense you quite lonely
Your friends are sick
Your eyes are tired
You are not sure you are hearing
the rain drops
hitting the air-conditioner
Car horns of the day of the dead
Dark flight of leaves
to hide the serpent of infancy

False silence of Saturday on which to repent
Like an insect the squashed logic
shines on the mirror
The harmony of weepings opens
like wood to fire
It is nearly noon

I enter into a violent collaboration
with the orchids of fatigue
Intimate relation black as coffee
Stones thrown into the reading of the immortals
Thought detests its shape
of slippery meat

The insects thrum in the shadows
questers of oral pleasure
proposing a parking place

Three hats full of popcorn
are filmed in close-up

Your disguised exile
you had to find it again
in the stripes of Hart Crane's T-shirt

You had to conjure
the evil eye of the still lives

You caressed blond hair dry
like the song of the bees

Your damn exile

New York

31 October — 8 November 1996

post-script

"Kierkegaard gave me his bones," Michel Bulteau said to me when we first met in London in 1973. Tall, sharp-featured, long black hair, black velvet suit. Very dainty - *à la* Chely bones (Rimbaud's - I would believe it) & nerves. Nerved bones, hand nerves - amounting an electrifying intensity I have rarely witnessed. No wonder the manifesto he and several young French poets (Maurice Mézieres the other first-rate writer among them) had just published was called the "Manifeste Electrique aux paupières des jupes" - it remains the most radical experimental movement in post-Surrealist France. If it & the ensuing poetry club on French avant-garde traditions, it was primarily to denounce themselves from their traditions; the group's major sympathies lay with Burroughsian collage, against post-war parades & a Warhol/Lou Reed-ish dandyism, via the new figure of the US-based French poet, translator & collageur Claude Péline - the latter's sense of the "incalculable regard des yeux" (language's incurable latency) being its primary goal for the group's activities. The movement, as behoves all such movements, distinguished relatively fast, but Bulteau went on to produce a wide range of work: prose poetry (some 10 or so books & pamphlets) to prose narratives & novels (*Le Pêcheur de la Vierge* & *Les Filles du Zodiaque* to the recent novel *L'Égypte*), as well as other poetic films (such as *Mélieux* & *Le Feu*) and several underground rock albums (*Mélieux*, *Jeune Femme*, *Sick Light*, *Angere*). His energy remains undiminished, & in the highest, uncompromisingly inflexible (one of his books is called *Le Feu* - *Power of French poetry*, is ironic, ironic, more intense than ever. This "anthology" covers some very early work from the sixties, then a more "classic" but somewhat rare before concluding with poems - mostly set in Yunnan, from his most recent collection (*Sécheresse*, *Les Éditions de la Sorbonne*, 2000). Throughout his career, in a cult in Sans's playing at knowledge with Rimbaud - the stakes were high: the very bones of poetry.

Diane Jacks

Albany, August 2000

Three hats full of popcorn
are filmed in close-up

Your disgusted smile
you had to had it again
in the stripes of Hart Crane's T-shirt

You had to conjure
the evil eye of the still boys

You crossed blood over dry
like the wing of the dove

Your dumb smile

New York

30 October — 8 November 1956

post-script

"Rimbaud gave me his bones," Michel Bulteau said to me when we first met in London in 1973. Tall, sharp-featured, long black hair, black velvet suit. Very skinny - skeletal? Only bones (Rimbaud's? - I could believe it!) & nerves. Nerved bones, boned nerves - emanating an electrifying intensity I have rarely witnessed. No wonder the manifesto he and several young French poets (Matthieu Messagier the other first-rate writer among them) had just published was called the "Manifeste Electrique aux paupières des jupes" - it remains the most radical experimental move(ment) in post-Surrealist France. If it & the ensuing poetry drew on French avant-garde traditions, it was primarily to demarcate themselves from these traditions; the group's major sympathies lay with Burroughsian cut-up, a general post-Beat panache & a Warhol/Lou Reed-ian dandyism, via the core figure of the US-based French poet, translator & collagist Claude Pélieu - the latter's sense of the "incurable retard des mots" (language's incurable lateness) being an essential goad for the group's activities. The movement, as behooves all such groupings, disintegrated relatively fast, but Bulteau went on to produce a wide range of work, from poetry (some 20 or so books & pamphlets) to prose narratives & essays (from *La Pyramide de la Vierge* & *Les Filles des Eaux* to the recent novel *L'Effrayeur*), as well as avant-garde films (such as *Main Line*) and several underground rock albums (*Mahogany Brain's Smooth Sick Light; Rinçures*). His energy remains unbounded, & he, the elegant, uncompromising enfant terrible (one of his books is called *Enfant Dandy Poème*) of French poetry, is bonier, nervier, more intense than ever. This "microselected" offers some very early work from the sixties, then a more "classic" late-seventies text before concluding with poems, mostly set in Yemen, from his most recent collection (*Sérénité moyenne, l'arbalète*/Gallimard 2000). I imagined him there, in a café in Sana'a playing at knuckle-bones with Rimbaud - the stakes were high: the very bones of poetry.

Pierre Joris

Albany, August 2000



"Richard gave me his bones," Michel Buton said to me when we first met in London in 1977. Tall, sharp-featured, long black hair black velvet suit. Very skinny - skeletal! Only bones (Richard's - I could believe it) & nerves. Nervous bones - bonded nerves - emanating an electrifying intensity. I have rarely witnessed. He wanted the manifesto he and several young French poets (Maurice Messiaen the other first-time writer among them) had just published was called the "Manifeste Électrique aux poètes des jours" - it remains the most radical experimental movement in post-Surrealist France. If it & the ensuing poetry drew on French avant-garde traditions, it was primarily to denounce themselves from these traditions: the groups major sympathies lay with Buton's own cut-up, a general post-war paradigm & a Whitmanian free-verse dandyism, vs the core figure of the US-based French post-war avant-garde: Claude Ponge - the latter's sense of the "impossible" toward the most "language's impossible" (meaning being an essential goal for the group's activities). The movement, as before, all such groupings, distinguished themselves, but Buton went on to produce a wide range of work, from poetry (some to be in books & pamphlets) to prose narratives & essays (from La Poudre de la Vie to La Poudre de la Mort to the recent novel L'Épave), as well as avant-garde films (such as Alain Lecoq's and several underground rock albums (L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave). His energy remains unbounded, & he, the elegant, uncompromising writer (one of his books is called Épave (L'Épave) of French poetry, is done) never more intense than ever. This "maverick" offers some very early work from the sixties, that a more "classic" late-seventies text before concluding with poems, mostly set in Yemen, from his most recent collection (L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave, L'Épave). I imagined him there in a cafe in San Francisco playing a knuckle-bone with Richard - the tables were high: the very bones of poetry.

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