

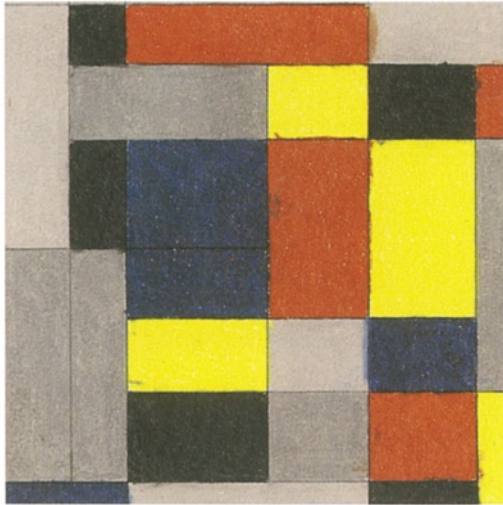
**modern colours**  
wystan curnow



**modern colours**  
wystan curnow



Jack Books Auckland



Mondrian's *Composition* (1920), as it would look using Delbo's unsensitized film

Modern

Colours

they're up

like harlequin

like **Boom!**

in the afternoon

I

PREPARATIONS FOR  
AN ECLIPSE

walls are white  
while yellow

yellow hangings  
yellow on down

sallow mattings  
sallow mats lie

serge saffron sofas  
sallow sofas saffron

cane chairs share  
ochres arcane share

yellow lilies in vases  
white and yellow lines

liveried functionaries  
grave diggers and red guards

standing in lines waiting  
on flanking on black Blank

flanks of the Nothing  
red guards delineating

the grave waiting beside  
the empty zero Nothing

ladders lying along side  
flanks of the black Hole

Nothing the yellow back  
of the white back of the

recently uncovered  
wet clay pale yellow clay

on their boots in lines  
the guards waiting for them

black trousered black  
white and red blouses

the suspension of being  
for its/their release waiting

when they come the People  
of a sudden come in

then in come the People  
as a throng, holding

aloft a yellow high  
Sphere so bright

they've bandaged eyes  
and are crying as one

Black world, Zaum sun  
(Dada is the word)

Zaum sun, the black world  
has come!

During this month  
I shall really be in need of:  
8 tubes of flake white  
6 tubes of malachite green  
2 tubes of yellow ochre  
1 tube of red ochre  
2 tubes of ultramarine  
2 tubes of cobalt  
1 tube of raw sienna  
1 tube of ivory black

Reds lamp tresses

gyratory pianistic updrafts

of reading matters and socialite getups

by Arp's four cousins' famous

forte celibacy and so forth

from a long line of vanishing points

bundling off big settees

well into the wee small hours

almost to his monocle. Erik's impeccable spotless against him her hand now pulled down his standup balcony collar railings downpipe her small chin silk black dress the short and shoulder blade tip of chin the photograph taken is goatee shade pulled down almost to his monocle "her long graceful neck" of the broad flat brimmed over Valentine's dark blade tip of cape (Kluver's mistake) its stand-away tortoise shell spectacles from Germany mother's fourth floor apartment standup collar and show some shoulder out of the shade overcoat by plaster masks of lines "her long graceful neck" the shutters shut (Gertrude) shutter his goateed shadow broad brimmed flat hat slightly aslant she shutters leaning lightly against him her hand now resting on Erik's left shoulder "her long graceful neck"

The staircase to the third floor apartment was awfully dim and dingy. And it smelt. There were the usual toilets on each landing which were used by all and sundry. Mondrian's brown front door opened onto a small vestibule and a dark corridor, but when you entered the studio it seemed, according to Maud Van Loon, like stepping into paradise. Although small, the studio was exceedingly bright and very tidy – to this artist bohemian disarray was clearly anathema. Alfred Roth wrote: 'The room with its white walls and the rhythmically placed red, yellow and blue squares and rectangles, the major and minor accents, immediately enthralled me.' Other visitors reported an 'incredible feeling of beauty, of peace, of quiet and harmony.'

Mondrian occupied 26 Rue du Départ more or less continuously between 1914 and 1936. Starting in 1921, he decorated and re-decorated it as an extension in three dimensions of the paintings he produced there. Its appearance is significant then not only to an appreciation of his working conditions or even of his ideas of interior design, architecture and town planning but to a general understanding of how we might contextualise, or properly enlarge upon the formal meaning of his highly 'abstract' paintings. So it is hard to underestimate the importance of the task of the 'reconstruction' that was undertaken by Frans Postma and his team of researchers in the late 1980s. Or their achievement in producing the life-size replica for the exhibition 'Earthly Paradise' in Amsterdam, 1994.

Rue du Départ gets its name from its intersection with the south western city boundary represented then by Boulevard Edgar Quintet, not from its present proximity to the Gare Montparnasse which opened in 1852. Mondrian liked the view of the signals and tracks afforded by his studio window, it was a link to the modern. The station is in fact variously connected to the history of his building; the station's growth led to its demolition in 1938 and later to the erection of the current station and the 209m curtain-walled Tour du Maine that now looms so incongruously over Rue du Départ. And it was in the archives of the station's history that Postma found the architectural documents that proved essential to his reconstruction of Mondrian's studio.

But what of the furnishings and decorations? The only photographs we have of the studio's interior were by a photographer from the neighbourhood, named

Delbo, taken in March 1926, and commissioned by the artist to illustrate his article on architecture, 'Neo-Plasticism. The Home—The Street—The City.' They are of course black and white prints, and no negatives have survived.

In two of the photographs, the painting *Composition in Grey, Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1920 can be seen. Its special significance to Mondrian is suggested by the fact that he never sold it and by its installation here above the entry door occupying the place conventionally reserved for the crucifix. (A choice reminiscent of Malevich's installation of his *Black Square* in 'the beautiful corner' normally occupied by the devotional icon in the living rooms of the homes of Russian peasants.) For Postma, however, this painting offered the clue to the colours of Mondrian's studio. Obviously the colours are crucial to an appreciation of the impact the studio made on its visitors. Could they be deduced by matching the grey tones of the painting in Delbo's photographs with its actual colours and comparing them with the grey tones of the studio's interior? There were six different tones of grey in the painting: red, yellow, blue and two shades of grey and black.

What seemed straight forward in theory proved much more difficult in practice, however. In the first place it turned out that the grey tones in his photographs differed from those Postma found in the black and white photographs he himself took of the painting. Was the difference in the painting or the film? Apparently, Delbo had used a film stock developed for portrait photography that was less sensitive to yellow than to blue and that had long ago been taken off the market. And then, the grey tones in Delbo's photographs were determined in part by the light conditions in the studio. Until variations attributable to those conditions were eliminated the greys could not be successfully matched. The colours of the painting and of the oil paints Mondrian used had to be submitted to spectrographic analysis, computer models made of the lighting conditions, before a plausible replication of the studio's appearance could be produced.

Mondrian's room was, however, a manifold construction, a work in progress. He changed the studio before and after Delbo took his photographs for he was constantly composing and recomposing the walls in his mind and in fact. How does Frans Postma's 'paradise' differ from that of Maud van Loon? Of Alfred Roth, who heard Bach when he looked at them, while some of us think of Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson and Mead Lux Lewis.

(  
Blue nude  
  
I saw you  
  
reclining  
  
alone  
)

## KNOCKING ON KLEBNIKOV'S DOOR

Let me introduce myself  
My name's Roman, Roman  
Jakobson. The year is  
1913, and – who'd have  
guessed it – here I am knocking  
on Klebnikov's door. (He  
has no phone.) I'm a mere  
schoolboy, yet already an  
accomplished linguist  
and a total devotee of  
Russian Futurism. He's  
twenty-eight and I'd say  
already the best damn poet  
in the whole wide world.

'Let me introduce myself, my  
name is Roman Jakobson.'  
Proffering my anthology  
of Zaum poetry excerpted  
entirely from the Rumjancev  
Museum library for just  
this occasion.

He's impressed  
I can tell. Some of my  
excerpts he excerpted  
straight into the mouths of  
memaids in 'The Night in  
Galicia' for example.  
Kruchenykh drops by while  
I'm there, with *Roar* hot  
off the press. I'm asking has  
he painted and he shows me  
diaries with pages of signs in  
coloured pencil he says were  
experiments in coloured speech.

## LOVELY ROSE

Sweet and lovely rose sleepwalkers'  
subjections, and vaunting morning  
monodies might rhyme. Is this  
my time just for remonstrating?

*You ladies, you  
two in Ljubljana  
you two in New York*

you've got the goods  
same old story just emendations  
brimming simultaneously  
eyes on the sun

*OHO OHO  
OHO OHO OHO*

Dropping flaming matches  
spiralling instantaneous  
incendiary staircases  
10 centimeters down  
to where conflagrations grow

With each burning word your  
tenderness borrows frequencies  
from encrypted sit coms  
juggles goofballs of hopeless love  
with the most recent testaments to  
ever more blatant immolations  
demanded by the detestable  
ideologues of our day, o ladies  
can this ever be good?



Jet mauve death  
Slicked hectares of  
Stippled vermilion

Oblivion off airmail  
End-use less black tack  
Purple forces smear

Wilds splay the numbers  
Cracked dearth debt  
Rose then pips moved  
Ethnics sternest vertigo

LISSITZKY DESCRIBES THE EFFECT  
OF HIS DEMONSTRATIONSRAUME OR RAUM FÜR  
KONSTRUKTIVE KUNST, DRESDEN, 1926, FOLLOWED  
BY MARIA GOUGH.

“ On entering the room . . . one is confronted by a grey wall surface , adjoining a white one on the left side and a black one on the right side . Through the varying widths of the frames the visual axes are shifted from the symmetrical axes of doors, thus creating the rhythm of the whole. With every movement of the spectator in the room the impression of the walls changes what was white becomes black and vice versa . Thus an optical dynamic is generated as a consequence of the stride , This makes the spectator active . The play of the walls is complemented by what is visible through the shimmering frames . The open -pattern masking surfaces are pushed up or down by the spectator , who discovers new pictures , or screens what does not interest him . He is physically compelled to come to terms with the exhibited objects .”



El Lissitzky's Dresden room

“ If the visitor stood  
 at the west entrance  
 to the Dresden  
 space  
 she or he found directly ahead – and thus  
 on  
 gray – an enlargement of Lissitzky’s photo-  
 graph , Untitled ( Hand with Compasses ) , (   
 1924 ) , ...  
 and his gouache – and – paper Round Proun (   
 1926 ) . From the same stand  
 point , Mondrian’s paintings on  
 the wall to the left  
 – the north wall – appeared on  
 white . As the visitor entered the gallery and  
 moved closer to Lissitzky’s works , the north  
 wall gradually turned to black through an  
 infinitesimal range of shades of gray.  
 This process of architectural chiaroscuro  
 was reversed in the case of the south wall ,  
 to the visitor’s right , which shifted  
 from black to  
 gray  
 to  
 white as the  
 visitor approached Lissitzky’s  
 work . Entering  
 via the Dresden Raum’s  
 south entrance , however , the visitor  
 found Mondrian’s work directly ahead on  
 gray , Lissitzky’s work to the right  
 on a black wall that transformed into  
 white as she or he moved closer to  
 the north wall , and  
 so on ,  
 ad infinitum “

Maria Gough

*January 14*

While down some impasse  
off Avenue du Maine  
there's a studio-canteen where  
Marie's barbaric hangings  
black tablecloths red  
napkins white plates at the dîner  
Braque in upon which burst  
Modigliani's mob of artists  
and models and in the ensuing  
mêlée she throws Amedeo  
downstairs and Picasso locks  
the door and pockets the key  
murmurs in the ear of Pâquerette:  
the destiny of objects and  
the dance of turkey bones  
late into the night in Marie's canteen  
night of the dinner welcoming  
back Braque from World War  
rejoicing in his recovery from  
head wounds and celebrating  
his restoration to the company  
of the artists

Listen here

We want a new

Planet on the blue

Dome of the sunk

Sun

We want words

That have taken

Leave of their

Senses

We declare all

All things to be

Groundless. Their

Future is in

The Air

## MODERN SOUNDS

Colourless electro-magnetic  
architectural structures  
enhanced their twin-triadic  
tolvotubular singulvalvulous  
high fidelity dial-a-diallers  
with low chromatic emanations  
as modern as tomorrow afternoon  
from light sources distributed  
by circumcentric electric  
reflectors with supershielded  
umbrella antennae attachments  
for distance listening and connected  
by the magnetic links of a  
Bellini-Tostoc dynaphone  
coupling system comprising  
fifty plus coloured filters  
arranged aethereophonically  
in accordance with the spirit  
of the actors on stage. Bravo!

The long term luminous  
wireless radiation receives  
these sheaves and walls plus  
banshee wails 'tween bulletin  
or vitaltone speakers' dynamic  
combinations transmissions' extra-  
vagrant effects—key clickings

vaticum cleaners, radio stammers  
bawling the whole hamshack and  
wobbedown of interpenetration  
plus the addled interference of  
man-made chiaroscuro-  
scopes inaugurating choirs  
of forlornly ethereal voices  
—frequency to frequency—  
aluminium dissonance soundscape  
headphone squeal whistle  
hiss and crackle kilowattage  
split, dinted, and soughed midst  
this multi-media melegoturny of  
trancontinental transmission.  
Behold Enrico Prampolini's  
Grand harmonic condenser  
Hooray for this unforeseen  
aphasically Futurist impresario  
with his sensational sono-  
graphic proscenial enginium!

Todd's  
[Xotic]

Copies  
on Mott

What Street  
can compare  
with Mott Street?

R.Mutt

Piss and Live  
piss Mott

## Coloured Matter Possibly Colourless

Everything is striving to leave the globe, and to make its way further in space, but Thanks to the relationship between the elements which have not yet been discovered, it sits like a tick in the earth. All human behaviour is the sign of this striving, And we see that [ **for example, to get dark blue ultramarine** ] tained its highest Limit on the sur [ **from green ultramarine , green powder** ] and space, after Which begins the [ **must be heated up until it becomes red in** ] further in space, Takling on a dyn [ **a strong flow of air. This operation must be** ], it will return to Classical tranqu [ **carried out until the colour acquires the de-** ] nce, has shown Me that in its pr [ **sired shade of blue, consequently here al-** ] two moments. Of non-colour [ **ready, in this authentic chemical process,** ] squares. This occurred element [ **we are talking about a desired degree in the** ] dations. I have Checked, as I [ **preparations of colour, consequently meas-** ] the line of life as Energy and hav [ **uring proceeds according to desire. This ch-** ] movement of colour. Three mo [ **emist has produced blue ultramarine accor-** ] the colours of the Rainbow, and [ **ding to his objective measurements, which** ] constructing the Graph and atte [ **seems to be the law or norm of intensity for** ] pears as the final Spot of this developing movement. The analysis of Suprematism gave me the idea That colour matter is possibly colourless and assumes colour in accordance with Various tensions of movement. Painting as colour matter has arrived at a new cond-

*From Non-Objectivity. K.Malevich.*

## VENCE YELLOW

From eleven in the morning  
from eleven until two or three  
in the afternoon until two or three  
**[the yellow glass]** is reflected

**[the yellow]** is reflected on the white  
on the white flooring is reflected  
as **[an intense lemon yellow]**  
despite its being despite being  
on the window itself  
it's being **[a weak yellow]**

itself **[a weak yellow]** reflected  
as **[an intense lemon yellow]**  
and its reflection on the white being  
surrounded its reflection on  
the chapel flooring by a particular  
light on the white: a blue  
being a blue that I have never  
seen before except in the sheen  
of butterfly wings as a  
particular blue light on the  
floor or in the flame of burning  
sulphur or the sheen that I have  
never seen, blue of butterfly wings  
of burning sulphur in the chapel  
surrounding **[the intense lemon  
yellow]** of the reflection  
I expect many more surprises

There is too much **[yellow]** verging  
**[yellow]** verges on orange  
in the buttercup in **[the  
yellow]** we have and **[the blue  
-green/ yellow harmony]** we have  
lacks the subtlety it lacks what  
it should derive – a subtlety –  
from **[the lemon yellow]** the subtle  
harmony we want from it since  
**[the buttercup yellow]** since  
**[the yellow]** is closer verging  
onto the red than onto the green  
in the spectrum than the red

## MAX ERNST AND THE DREAM OF FAUX MAHOGANY

Finding myself one rainy evening  
in a seaside inn, my eye was drawn  
to the grooves in the floorboards of my room  
grooves deepened by a thousand scrubblings  
that at once brought to mind a dream  
of faux mahogany phantoms in panels  
of my childhood bedroom, a dream that had  
become an obsession, so that I then  
set about making a series of drawings  
by putting sheets of paper on the floor  
and rubbing them furiously with black lead.  
As I examined the results I was  
surprised at the sudden intensification  
of my interpretative capacities  
and the hallucinatory succession  
of contradictory words, phrases and sentences  
that superimposed themselves one upon  
the other, with the persistence and speed  
of sexual recollections.

Hence the procedure of *frottage*, resting  
thus upon nothing more than a mechanical  
enhancement of the mind's susceptibilities  
and evading all conscious mental guidance  
(of reason, taste, morals), and reducing  
to the extreme the action part of the 'author'  
so-called of the work, this procedure is  
revealed to be an equivalent, albeit  
a rough and ready one, of the method  
of the present work. Striving more and more  
to restrain my own active participation  
in its unfolding and by widening  
in this way the active part of the mind's  
hallucinatory faculties  
I came to assist *as spectator* at  
the birth of its various parts, from the tenth  
of August, nineteen twenty five, memorable  
day of the discovery of *frottage*.

## PORTRAIT OF PICABIA

Francis Picabia's a nomad we thought  
he goes through ideas the way  
one goes through countries and cities  
–incessant, says Gertrude Stein–  
swallowing abstruse rosellas and  
wood pigeons, wolfing down volume  
on volume, hanging around high flyers  
making love to curious cormorants  
and washing one's forearms in alizarin

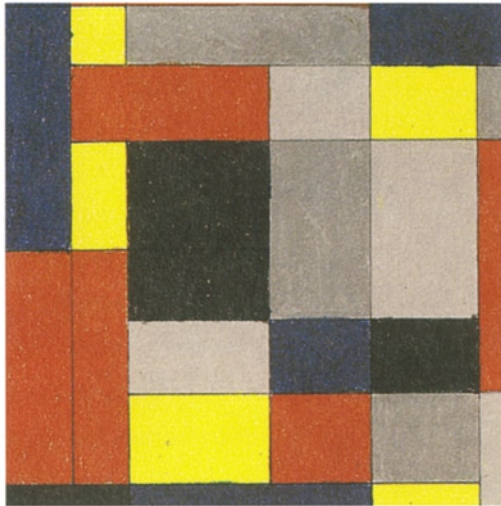
'Funny Guy' Francis Picabia  
is an idiot  
is a dag  
is a pickpocket  
is an imbecilic professor  
of Spanish

Francis Picabia is to style parliaments  
as jumbo jets and jumbos as I don't know  
what costly erotic cures for dumbstruck  
summoning up plausible ungeants  
hologrammatically from the decks of  
ocean-going liners, just to get by. Says

he from the pig's back! Or the internal  
engines of combustion! Steam heat!  
More than him as to ghost writer

of resignation speeches for sticky label  
despotics never again see the people  
he knew and loved, even casual acquaintances  
–notorious roue–never put–his word–  
the same woman twice in his bed unless  
he'd another who cheated on him every  
day with a different man. Even so.

Francis Picabia's a wag  
He is an idiot  
He's a clown  
Is not a painter  
Is a crazy  
Is a Spaniard  
Is a professor  
Is not serious  
Is rich  
Is poor.  
Take his word



Mondrian's *Composition* (1920), as it would have looked if the grey values had been rendered regularly in the film used by Delbo.

## II

### MONDRIAN'S RESTAURANT

#### I

Chairs, yellow and blue. Who is 'himself'? What is abnormal? The outer side we understand first. The orange is no good before it is ripe, nor beef before it is ready. What's the link "tween pig and tong"? White-decked tables—carafes—blue siphons—people under the terrace awning and indoors. Pang. A young woman with a pointed hat. 'Une orange.' When are we ripe 'n' ready? 'Un café vieux marc.' A glass wall open: the little restaurant itself open to the sun. A glass of wine knocked over. Spillage. Abnormal only 'here.' Orange outside and orange inside. Beef is beef and orange is orange. This workman does not allow himself luxury. Liqueur neutralises wine. The whole framed by evergreens in boxes also green. My blue siphon. Who experiences everything and remains unchanged? The crowd decides. The orange



from outside is other than  
the orange from inside.  
A gourmet is a gourmet even  
in the church of Montrouge.  
The young woman with a hat  
puts water in her wine. Inside  
and outside: the owners and  
the people asking for an eight-hour  
day or night (says my *L'Intran* ).  
In winter the restaurant changes  
again. Of course the taller  
person sees more. 'Un petit  
suisse'. Yet a businessman is  
often a man of very little  
business and an artist is  
often very little an artist.  
This man does not put water  
in his wine, and takes no liqueur.  
Icy fingers down the line.  
Workman and intellectual.

The lace curtain in front  
of the glass wall pretties up  
what's outside: TNAR—UATS—ER,  
gigantic letters on three  
large glass panels  
above the white. Breakage.  
A car on the left, a peram-  
bulator to the right. Just as  
white inside and out.  
A man is sometimes a  
woman and a woman some-  
times no woman. Pang.  
The pharmacy still has char-  
bon naphthole granule

and vin de Pepsin Byla.  
It may be jelly. A family.  
The words tell their meaning  
On the outside: *restaurant*.  
Both reach their destination.  
'Voila, Monsieur.' 'Un boeuf gros set.'  
Everything has a remedy  
and each remedy its disease.  
'Sunday best.' The ornament  
on the white below has no  
special meaning. The ever-  
greens in boxes: neither  
to the left nor to the right  
on Palm Sunday. Orange  
on the white plate on the  
white napkin. 'Une pomme  
dessert.' The coarse and the fine.  
Buttermilk helps one's stomach.  
I think of 'Sunday' in the  
provinces. It is what it is  
from both inside and out. Straight  
up. Purity through one  
colour and purity through  
fullness of colours. Spill-  
age. Both are necessary.  
Where there is nothing, even  
the king has no rights:  
there is no buttermilk in Paris.  
A Parisienne. 'Une Pomme puree.'  
The green shrubs are not  
palms. Purity by reflection  
and purity by absorption. Can  
they take each other's place?  
Supplanting. 'Une banane.'  
A beggar. Today sprigs of  
Boxwood (*buis*) serve as palms.

II

Who absorbs *purely*  
and reflects *purely*?  
Each costs money,  
Each has value.

The flower seller  
doesn't water her wine  
but her flowers in the sun.  
'Une chopine de rouge.'

He is *dans la puree*.  
The *buis* is blessed  
By the church. The orange  
a feast in the sun.

'Elle n'est pas tres  
bonne,' the apple is  
of little value, yet it  
costs money. Her

flowers come from  
outside Paris and so  
does she. 'Une religieuse.'  
'Un mendiant.' The shrubs,

to what do they owe  
their blessing? Yet some-  
times one fears pure  
colour. 'Deux cafes, deux!'

So does the little woman  
with the coeurs a la crème.  
'Quatre sous de pain.'  
Better to eat a 'mendiant'

than to be one. Re-re-re-re—t-toe-oeh!  
White envelope on white  
napkin. I see pink  
paper again. She has

lunch and does business  
with the restaurant. Worse  
bread, higher priced, *after*  
the war. Union Centrale—

an archway—des Grandes  
Marques. There is the  
blessing (heartfelt) of the  
green of the shrubs.  
10 cts. *Horoscope...*

a legacy, yet the horoscope  
is for a woman, not for me.  
*A coeur a la crème* : a heart  
of buttermilk in milk.

Behind the evergreens  
On the footpath, people  
to the right and people  
to the left. A great factory

gate across the way is  
closed on Sunday.  
These chairs, these tables,  
these dishes, these people

—who blesses them? A deaf  
mute through the green shrub.  
An automobile. White  
in white and yet not the same.

Most to the night. On  
Sunday who is 'open'?  
Three men with palms.  
Pink paper: *Horoscope*.

A Sunday hat blows off.  
Buttermilk in Paris!  
'Voici, monsieur'  
'Merci, mademoiselle.'

A woman trolley  
conductor. The flower  
seller also has palms.

Re-re-re-re-h-h  
—*Montrouge*—St. August  
-in in red on yellow.  
I feel the wind along

the glass screen (slip  
stream) behind me. We  
find the same everywhere  
in different form. On

the right the Metro and  
also the Barriere. The  
green shrubs leave  
an opening. Lace curtains.

A widow, a child, a  
decorated soldier  
all with palms. The deaf  
mute hears no noise

from outside. The sun is  
shining and the wind is  
cold. Streamers colours feel  
ings. Many coeurs a la crème

take the place of liqueurs  
and medicines. The  
Barriere leads out and the  
Metro leads in.

Two soldiers. How did the  
soldiers earn their palms?  
Does he hear from within?  
The good and the bad together.

The liqueurs and the  
medicines in turn  
replace many 'hearts.'  
Left are the church of

Montrouge and the city.  
Everything has its 'sphere.'  
A poet without a palm.  
'Du pain s'il vous plait.'

'Je vous donne mon coeur'—she  
has many of them,  
la bonne femme. For a long  
time Montrouge was beyond

the Barrière. Restaurant,  
things and men. Two  
ladies with palms and parasols.  
'Merci madame.' The sun

is shining on the flower  
carts, on the oranges,  
on the avenue. 'Ma fille!'  
Bing-bang—bing  
-bang—Montrouge  
church is still where it was.

III

One thing at the expense  
of another. People like  
to protect themselves.  
Everyone talks.

A poster across the way:  
**Fabrique de sommiers.**  
At one time she had just one  
heart. Black silhouettes behind

the green shrubs from  
outside, is that why they  
speak? The factory is necessary  
like the restaurant. The couple

over there are sharing one  
coeur a la crème. The sun  
shines equally on the dark  
figures of people—darker

on Sunday than on other  
days—and on white tables  
—whiter on Sunday than  
on other days. Flower

barrows by the footpath.  
The dove of the Ark carried  
such a green branch. The  
deaf-mute sees well enough.

Behind me, through the glass,  
a bit of the fortifications  
—posters to the fore. The petit  
trottin has two coeurs

a la crème. On working days  
it is different at this hour.  
All the same. Barrows with  
apples. 'Merci madame.'

'L'addition, s'il vous plait.'  
Does he see more? Behind  
the fortifications apaches  
asleep on the grass. The  
foreigner over there is eating

his coeur a la crème all  
alone. An hour later, again  
different. Barrows with oranges.  
Montrouge—Gare de l'est

—Gare de l'est—Montrouge  
in red on yellow. Rhoe-ae-hae!  
One is not yet out of the city.  
A soldier. No people: chairs,

tables, carafes, siphons  
are again 'themselves.'  
Barrows everywhere. Coming  
and going. This automobile

he does not see. Apache, city,  
police: each exists through  
the others. He has a coeur  
a la crème? Who is 'himself?'

'Caisse.' Ebb and flow.  
'Qu'est-ce que vous prenez,  
madame?' The avenue runs  
on beyond the Barriere. A coeur  
a la crème is not only soft but

also white. Pang. The 'caisse' is  
still operating—thanks to money.  
Both the trams alike but their content  
is different. The fille de sale

is not deaf-mute. At night,  
not individuals. 'Vous  
avez terminez, monsieur?'  
A glass of wine is knocked over.

Breakage. Heads and hats  
above evergreens. Taller ones.  
Outside, a child is spelling:  
A-lec-san-dre. The orange

was deaf-mute. Beef.  
Only the crowd is moving  
but the avenue is alive.  
Chairs, yellow and blue. Who

experiences everything and  
stays unchanged? Evergreens  
about as tall as the normal man.  
From this inside I see *erdnaxela*

on the flap of the terrace  
awning against the light.  
Which 'speaks' most? A freight  
train is running on the tram

tracks: with produce. White  
-decked tables—the carafes—blue  
siphons—people, under the terrace  
awning and indoors. In winter

the restaurant changes  
again. What is normal? But  
is not Hebrew. My boeuf  
bourguignon was also deaf-mute.

Without provisions, no city, no  
restaurant. The glass wall  
open: the little restaurant opens  
itself to the sun. The lace curtain

in front of the glass wall, scribblings  
over: TNAR—UATS—ER,  
gigantic letters on the three  
glass panels above the white.  
'Un bifteck aux pommes.' 'Alexandre'

reversed. Yet it too 'spoke.'  
Everything is linked. The whole  
bordered by evergreens in boxes  
that also are green. Outside.

Words tell their meaning on  
the outside: RESTAURANT.  
Who is normal? The word is  
changed but some of the letters

have not. But differently. Yet  
this hard-to-find link 'between  
pig and tong' in orange. Inside  
and outside: the owners and

the people asking for an  
eight-hour day or night (says  
*L'Intran* in my hands). Ornament  
on the white has special meaning.

It must be jelly. The French  
are not tall: in England the hedge  
would have to be taller. Who  
is the same from the inside

and from above? The orange  
was orange and the beef was brown.  
'Un café vieux marc'. Worker  
and intellectual. It is

what it is, both from inside  
and out. That soldier over there  
comes above it, so does that  
lady and so does that priest.

From the inside. The green.  
And yet each letter stays  
itself: inside meaning streaming.  
I would not have liked

either the other way around.  
This workman does not indulge:  
liqueur changes wine. A family.  
'Une pomme purée.' A little man

with a stiff leg is near me.  
Yet the outward remains the inward—  
the outward is made up of  
the inward and the inward

of the outward. 'Une blanquette  
de veau!' The young woman puts  
water, the young man puts water  
in his wine, yet takes no liqueur.



Le Mondrian restaurant, Paris

This book has been published primarily as a gift  
to my wife, family, and the following friends

Jim Allen  
Stephen and Jan Bambury  
Alex Calder and Sarah Sheiff  
Trish Clark  
Phil Dadson  
Leigh and Susan Davis  
Tony Green  
Roger Horrocks  
William and Felicity Somerville

And is dedicated to the memory  
of Jackson MacLow 1922–2004



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