

Yves Bonnefoy:

A Selection of Poems in Translation

Translated by Mark Daniel Cohen

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HYPERION:  
ON THE FUTURE OF AESTHETICS

*Yves*  
*Bonnefoy*

**A Selection of Poems in Translation**

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## Here, Still Here

Here, in the site of light. No longer dawn,  
But long to day with dicibles desires.  
Mirage melodic reverie remains  
But scintillation's stones to be transpires.

Here, even to the eve. The rose of shades  
Will turn to tick the walls. The rose of time  
Will noiselessly detone. The shining slabs  
At will will pace today enamored strides.

Here, still here, still. Stones upon the stones  
Have cobbled up the country of recall.  
So hardly sound the simple fruits to fall  
Enfevers yet in you time goes to heal.

# Theatre

## I

I'd see you quicken on the terraces,  
I'd see you wrestle at the wind,  
The cold cut blood your lips.

I've seen you break broad breathlessly at being dead, More Beautiful Than  
Lightning, when lightning lacquers blank panes with your blood.

## II

Senescent summer chapped you with its drab, a monotone of joy, we scorned  
the scarred intoxication life's.

"Rather ivy," you would state, "adhesion to the stones of night: presence  
without outlet, face sans root.

"Last pane delighted nail sun's decimates, but rather in tor village in to die.

"Rather wind..."

## III

It was a question of a wind that stiffer than recall,  
Stupor gowns' and crying stones'—and you at foreflame flew,  
Head Cartesian ruled hand flue wide all  
In quest of death on drums pulserunning of your gesturings.

It was the daylight of your breasts  
And finally you reigned and in absentia from my mind.

## IV

I wake, and rain. The wind is spearing you, Douve, coniferous and moor in  
dormancy by me. I'm at terrace, in a pit of death. In leaves of great dogs quail.

The arm you lift, alarm, to door, it lights me down the ages. Village of the  
embers, I each instant see you born, Douve,

At each instant die.

## V

The arm you lift as well the arm one turns  
Are to a time but to our dullness wits,  
And but with drawn the drapes verdure and mud  
There rests remain but flames of kingdom Death.

The leg unvested where the loud wind stabs  
Ahead it driving headlong rainheads thresh  
Will light to limen you come kingdom's hold,  
Douve's gestures, slowly gestures, gestures black.

## VI

What pallor mints you, river underdown, what artery of you explodes, where  
echo of your fall rebounds?

The arm you raise at sudden splays, takes flames. Your face recurls. What  
brumal densing wrests me your regard? Slow escarp of shades, frontier of  
death.

The mute arms bower you, an arbor of another shore.

## VII

Casualty confounded in the leaves,  
But baffled by the blood of passing paths,  
Yet to live's abettor.

I've seen you beached aback the battle's end  
To diffident aporch to silence, waves,  
And mouth astain with stars finality  
To crack acry the dread, your night's surveil.

Oh, lift to hard air sudden like a rock  
A gesture lovely as of coal.

## VIII

The song's absurd commences in the hands and in the knees, then the  
crashing in the head, the lifting lilt below the lips, and its conviction lace the  
versant underground the face.

At present time is out of joint the joinery of face. At present time is ratcheting  
the wrenching out of view.

## **IX**

White below the insect ceiling, bad light and at profile phase,  
Your gown in spite by venom of the lamps,  
I discover you extent,  
Your mouth aloft above a river detonates far off, on earth.

Being discomposed put to by being indestructible,  
Presence recomposed in torch of cold,  
Oh watcher, ever I disclose you dead,  
Douve: Phoenix, I am watchkeep in this cold.

## **X**

I see Douve extent. The height of carnal space, I hear her rustling. Black  
princes race their mandibles through space where hands of Douve unskain,  
bones unfleshed of their intertwine web grey arachnid massive lights.

## **XI**

Covert: silence: humus of the world—  
Toiled: the rays arachnid of alive—  
Already: in submit to slip to sand—  
All: for knowledged four-slit secrecy.

Invested for the festival of non  
And teeth undraped as if it were for love,

The fountain death, mine, present, unendure.

## **XII**

I see Douve extent. In the scarlit city of the air, where combat branches battle  
fore her face, and where the roots rout passage to her mass—she rays delight  
an insect shrill and in the horror song.

Apace ablack and of the earth, Douve, ravage worn, ecstatic, rejoins the gnarl  
lamp of the tablelands.

### **XIII**

Your face this evening lighted by the earth,  
And yet I see your eyes to putrefy  
And word face is no longer of a sense.

The inward sea's alight by eagles' turns,  
This is an image.  
And I hold you cold to depths where images unfix.

### **XIV**

I see Douve extent. In a chamber ivory, plasters circle undereyes, the mouth  
gone gyre, and sentence hands to lush of grass; the grass incursions her on  
every front.

Door opens. Orchestra advance. And eyes of aspect, gemcut, flue to thoraxes,  
luxuriant, the heads cold billed, of mandibles, are inundate to her.

### **XV**

Oh, indued with profile where earth's dead set,  
I witness you undo.

Bare grass on your lips, the lit of flint  
Compound your final smile.

At deep lore frit  
The antique bestiary of the mind.

### **XVI**

Household of a humble flame, where our declivities collide! Below the vault, I  
view you dawn, still Douve, catch death net perpendicular.

Douve ingeniuised, in invert: apace of suns through space funest, she slow  
makes her assent to nether ranks.

### **XVII**

Ravine pries at the mouth now,  
Five fingers fan haphazard in the forest now,

The first head flows through grasses now,  
The gorge decored with snow and wolves and now,  
The eyes give vent on those the voyagers of death and it is we in wind in  
water in the frigid now.

### **XVIII**

Precision presence that no flame could ever hitherto restrain; conveyor  
of secluded cold; alive, of but that blood reborn and blown by poem self  
decimates.

It was needful that you thus appear upon the deafen margins, at the funest  
where where your own lucency wears worse, that you suffer trial.

Oh, most lovely and your laugh it's death insteps! I dare now to convene with  
you, I can sustain the flame commission at your gestures' light.

### **XIX**

Initial day of cold, our head escapes  
As if a convict flee to atmosphere,  
But in an instant Douve that arrow dive  
And shatter at the ground the palms of crown.

Thus would we reincarnate our commit,  
But head gainsaid we cup a water cold,  
And sheaves of death are ticketing your smile,  
Attempted cleft in denseness of the world.

# The Salamander

## I

And now you're Douve in summer's chambered last.

A salamander flickers on the wall. Its fleece and human head sheds summer death. "I want to founder to in you, slim life," Douve cry. "Lightning vacance, run my lips, come run me through!"

"I love mine own selfblind, to sift to me to earth. I love no longer knowing which cold teeth mine own."

## II

Through night I'd vision ligneous of you, Douve, better by to feed you into flame. Green statue wedlocked bark, the better by delight in your ignescent head.

Between the digits weigh debate between the igneous and lips; I saw you cast me smiles. Though broad daylight you ember blind to me.

## III

"Regard me, and regard me, I have run!"

I'm near you, Douve, and I let light your way. Now nothing stands between us but this lithic lamp, small shade assuage, our hands the shade await. Salamander start, you dwell in immobility.

Have lived the instant in the fleshest near the most to hand transmutes to knowingness.

## IV

Thus, would we keep wake upon the peak of night of be. There thicket gave.

Concealed erupt, by what blood bird did you cut rounds our dark?

To chamber which did you rejoin and where the horror of the dawn wore worsen on the panes?

## True Name

I will name desert castle what you were,  
The night, the voice, the absency, your face,  
And when you'll plummet in the sterile earth  
I'll nomenclate nil lightning's carted you.

To die a countryside you loved. I come  
In infinitely on your dimlit ways.  
I decimate desire, your form, recall,  
Your enemy and pitiless to be.

I will denominate you war, I'll seize  
The liberalities of war and have  
In hands your face obscurancy transpierced,  
In heart this country storming lumifies.

## **True Corpse**

Line the mouth and with it wiped the face,  
And expurgate the corpse is and innate  
Illuminating fate in earthen speak,  
Most lowly wedlock come to consummate.

Slay that voice that used to to my face  
While we disheveled and disseminate,  
Immured these eyes: and I hold have Douve dead  
In Herbheit an sich with me cribbed again.

However chill may be that mounts of thee,  
However scorch intimacy our glance,  
Douve, I do speak in you; you I embrace  
In action of to know and of to name.

## Passing Fire

I passed by fire beheld in vacancy  
Hall shuttered tight and out extinguished light.

And I saw it burned still, and even was,  
And at an instant, at the point of poise  
Between the acts of ash, of embering  
At which to fire the option to desire  
Which whether wild or waver to embrace  
Of who she has seduced into the couch  
Of fragrant lambent grass, of broken wood.  
He is the bend of bough I brought into  
A yesterday, so quickened summer rain,  
He memories a Hindu god's regard,  
With some solemnity's initiate love,  
Of she who would of he who'd be encased  
By lightning anteceding all the worlds.

Tomorrow I will sift  
This fire near full to frigid, it will be  
Without doubt summer day the such as sky  
Endows all rivers, those that of the earth  
And melancholy coronary floods.  
The man and woman, know where to what time  
Their ravel flame is braiding or deduced?  
What wisdom modest in them is foreknows  
Within a falter diffidence of light  
When cry of bliss will curl the scream of throes?

Fire of Mornings,  
Breathing of two beings who repose,  
The arm of one enshouldered to the two.  
And I who have be come  
To bring to air the hall, to bring to light,  
Arrest, I sit, I give you my regard,  
An innocence of members into spray,  
Time packed so thick with time it's stopped to be.

## **Thus, Will We Walk**

Thus, will we walk wide welkin wreckages,  
The land of distant will to realize  
As if a destiny in living light.

The courtly most of countries longly sought  
Will etch before us salamander earth.

See, you'll state, this stone:  
It portals to propinquity of death.  
Secreted lamps in flames beneath our means,  
Thus, we walk with light.