

CRYSTALS TO ADEN

MICHEL BULTEAU

**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY PIERRE JORIS**

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CRYSTALS TO ADEN

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

WATCRIS88WORDS

Fluorescent amaranth of the veins.

I am clenched over my eyes of sand-film.

Christ on the star of chimney-cedillas.

TALON OF U ON THE FRIGHT-WING
CUT OUT BY THE NAILS' PEAKS
BUCCAL DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLES

February 1968

**THE DIAMOND
NEEDLE
OF
ANNIHILATION**

Raw chandeliers, ax combs, hole against pearl, the anal nothingness-saws. The glimmers toward the Dream with Oval. Over there, the mouth with the dice needles. The lame teeth of sleep, irrigating a solitude poisoned with carnivorous wainscot. The center-knife.

The velvet of ordered stems, the transmuted breath, the skins of turning coughs at the wound curtains. Screamed tongue of lukewarm triggers secretes preys at sands' depth. Echo of crimson mutilations. The furs' throat cut, teeth mud, at the massacre of the Secret's pores.

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 inter-
nal 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 aquari-
um eyes.

The eternal murmur of a scissor perfume.

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 tap-
ping 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

“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