

SHALL WE ESCAPE ANALOGY

Rosmarie Waldrop
Providence

I want to talk about the refusal of metaphor which Claude Royet-Journoud and Anne-Marie Albiach dramatize in their work (the latter most explicitly in "Enigma," the first part of her book, *Etat [State]*). It is a stance they share with a number of French (as well as American) poets, but as editors of the magazine *Siècle à mains* and, in Claude Royet-Journoud's case, of the radio program "Poésie ininterrompue," they did in fact much to focus the concerns of their generation.¹

I find this attitude of particular interest because, for the long stretch from Romanticism through Modernism, poetry has been more or less identified with metaphor, with relation by analogy. In linguistic terms, this has been an emphasis on the vertical axis of the speech act: the axis of selection, of reference to the code with its vertical substitution-sets of elements linked by similarity, rather than on the horizontal axis of combination, context, contiguity, syntax, and metonymy. By contrast, it is the latter that this generation of poets tends to foreground and, by implication, a view of the poem as constructing a world through its process, rather than expressing or representing an experience or world existing prior to its formulation.²

In a narrower historical context, the change of attitude is focused in a reaction against Surrealism or, among English-speaking poets, against Imagism, strong schools whose mainstay was the image, and especially metaphor. It was with the explicit program of searching for alternatives to Surrealism that Claude Royet-Journoud founded the magazine *Siècle à mains*.

Opening books by Claude Royet-Journoud or Anne-Marie Albiach, we are immediately struck by the amount of white space on the page. "So much white! so much white!" wailed a reviewer of *Le Renversement*.³ It seems indeed a far cry from Breton's psychic automatism which, in its desire to catch the functioning and speed of the

mind, tended toward overflow. Here, the stress is, rather, on what disrupts the flow, on the silence against which the words have to define themselves. Both Anne-Marie Albiach and Claude Royet-Journoud give white space, silence, a constituting function. "For thought to become act," says Claude Royet-Journoud, "there must first be a pause."⁴

However, in spite of this statement, the strong presence of white space does not reflect an initial inhibition in the writing process of these two poets. It does not indicate a kind of mental stammering, not a fight against an overwhelming silence from which you painfully wrest one word or phrase at a time, not a pausing *before* words come about. Rather, both poets begin by writing "massive prose," a "negative dungheap" ("fumier négatif," O, p. 60; H) by filling pages and pages of notebooks completely, from top to bottom. If it is not exactly automatic writing, it is at least a copious flow of words which, as with the Surrealists, is an attempt to "put your head down on paper" (O, p. 61). Claude Royet-Journoud speaks of it as the condition for entering into the right mental space for writing, as a possibility of seeing. Then, there is the second stage: taking the axe to it, erasing, paring it down to the core which will become the poem. Thus we might say that the writing process of these two poets, beside producing a text, also *enacts* their attitude toward the Surrealists, that it becomes a theater where the historical reaction of one generation of poets to another is replayed. This may in part account for the violence with which Claude Royet-Journoud talks about the process as "butchering" (H), though the frequent image of slaughtering and slaughtered animals in the poems goes deeper and has to do with his uneasy sense of the body which is present only as an agent of language and writing (hand, wrist, thumb in the book) or as the object of cruelty and mutilation.⁵

The violence of the "cleaning" is consciously directed against all that is traditionally associated with "poetry," "literature," "beautiful language" ("that would be blue/ the literary color/ whereas we hold wake over a new form of obscurity," R, p. 67). Claude Royet-Journoud speaks of systematically cutting out metaphor, assonance, alliteration, "as much as possible" in order to get down to a flat, literal language (M), to "the mystery of literalness" (H). So it is doubly programmatic when he writes a text with the title "Le renversement des images." He celebrates both the overthrow of images and the literal optical fact of the reversed image on the retina.

What we get instead of the expected poetic devices is a very

careful architecture or orchestration of the page. The spatial relation of words and phrases takes on the greatest importance. Both poets have referred to writing as theater and to the page as a stage on which the word-actors execute carefully choreographed movements. "An ellipsis is the disappearance of a character," says Anne-Marie Albiach in an interview with Joseph Simas.⁶

At least with Claude Royet-Journoud, the positioning of lines goes a long ways toward statement. Let us look at pp. 16–17 of *The Notion of Obstacle*:

le dehors, premier passage. la pensée traversait les rôles	 ce qui n'aura jamais lieu
the outside, first crossing. thought went through the roles	 which will never take place

On the left page the positioning, as much as the vocabulary, pairs "first crossing" and "thought went through the roles" against "the outside." The right page lines up "which will never take place" with "the outside." When a magazine, in printing Keith Waldrop's translation, lined the pages up by the top of the text, i.e. put the line "which will never take place" opposite "first crossing," the author was most upset. It became clear that he saw "which will never take place" in a strong relation to "the outside" rather than to "first crossing" or even to the line immediately preceding it. Indeed, Royet-Journoud's world is inside language where passage and movement of thought are events that definitely take place, whereas the outside can be questioned and denied. More important, the spatial arrangement is used to establish relations between terms and to replace, as much as possible, relation by metaphor or other forms of analogy.

In general, the pared-down, naked lines gain strength from being set in tension with the large white spaces which remain a field of energy through the reduction, still holding the charge of what had been there. In Anne-Marie Albiach's case this is true even in a spatial sense, as she likes to let phrases keep the original position they occupied in the first draft. With both poets, those devices that remain,

and especially the repetitions, take on enormous weight. For instance, again in *The Notion of Obstacle*, we read on two facing pages (50–51):

	le mur
	lettre inachevée
lettre	
	dans la bouche
	de pleine terre ⁷
dans la bouche	
de pleine terre	

The repeated “letter / in the mouth / of full earth” becomes insistent and gives to the semantic complex of “obstacle” (wall, incompleteness, full earth) a haunting death association, even though the grammar tries to elude the expected “bouche pleine de terre” (mouth full of earth). It also gives the letter a solidity (both as wall and as being of the full earth) that is strange only if we do not accept language as Royet-Journoud’s primary reality.

Among the unwanted poetic devices, metaphor bears the brunt of the attack. Its problematic is Claude Royet-Journoud’s main theme. He takes in its widest sense the old problem of the human being as sign-making animal who is conscious of the gap between thing and representation (a split that metaphor raises to the second power), between event and language (“immediate description was impossible,” R, p. 15), and yet (or therefore) is nostalgic for an undivided, unreflected, “immediate” and “real” life, *unio mystica* or paradise lost.

“I would love to be here,” writes Claude Royet-Journoud in his first book, *Le Renversement* (p. 42), here, in the “cercle nombreux,” the crowded circle of beasts and beings, in the midst of “life.” Instead, the speaker finds himself always among images, masks, roles, simulacra, make-believe, rehearsals, representations. The very air is theatrical (“a theatricality of air / in the outfield of repetition,” N, p. 22). “Shall we escape analogy” he asks at the center of the first book. Without a question mark. We would like to. We may try. But the answer is clearly: no. The mirror is not a stage. It is a prison. The sentence: life. His screams get frantic in their attempt to grasp it in spite of

everything, all of it, right now, here, as it happens, in the instant before it dies: "Prenez-le vivant" ("take him [it] alive") (R, p. 71).

Should this not be possible when the *tongue* seems to reconcile the two worlds, belongs to the sign as well as to the body, is both inside and outside us, personal and organic, yet is also a system shared by the whole culture? The poem "Entrait" shows us the tongue as our "tie-beam," both concrete and abstract. It comes with the ground, a given of geography. It is a muscle and as such under the rule of sleep (N, p. 87), the opening onto where the task can perhaps be accomplished, the gap abolished, where language is perhaps immediate and of the body. "Il respire au dos du sens" (N, p. 87), an ambiguous phrase: he breathes on the back of sense, riding it as you would an animal? Or he breathes in back, behind the back, of sense, of interpretation, i.e. on the other side of the mirror? In either case: here he *breathes*. But the tongue becomes a wall in the mouth. The sign wins out over the body: "dead tongue / around the mouth" (N, p. 84). And the body is its own obstacle as is language. Claude Royet-Journoud pares away at it, makes it sparse and austere. Yet he knows the obstacle is all there is, just as we can approach the infinite only through fragments, through the objects that, as his most recent title holds along with Wittgenstein, "contain the infinite."

"Cold" is perhaps the most frequent word in these poems, used both literally and metaphorically: "the cold as story" (O, p. 45). The word cannot hold onto life. Warmth itself appears as a fiction ("His childhood is a fiction of warmth," O, p. 55). The best the poet can hope for is that his work "look alive" (N, p. 63). Emmanuel Hocquard has argued that this phrase, "Cela fait vivant," could, beside the more obvious "This appears to be alive," also be shorthand for "Cela (ayant été) fait (de mon) vivant" ("having been made in my lifetime"), thus bearing at once on the process of writing, the thing done in my lifetime (out of my lifeblood, Anne-Marie Albiach would say) as well as on the product which resembles something alive. But in either case, the life (whether the subject's, the author's, or that of the represented object) is absent, and resemblance is all we are left with.⁸

This ties in curiously with Claude Royet-Journoud's preoccupation with the emptiness of the center: in the book, it is the gutter between the left and right page, which is of course blank. He connects this explicitly with the fact that the pronoun "I" does not occur at all in *The Notion of Obstacle* and very rarely in the other books. And it is in the center of his first book that he placed the sequence called "Middle

of Scatter" ("Milieu de dispersion") with its manifesto question: "shall we escape analogy." In the following two numbered sections, he opposes a discomfort with resemblance and with the "lie" that is literature—

resemblances cramped him
he talked about this impossibility of lying (R, p. 49)—

to his parameters of life: movement, place, looking and, on the next page, the need to grasp. But the movement, the passage, is toward absence: "He watches himself pass" (pass by, pass away). And here, in the movement toward death, we have "perhaps / the opposite of fable." Again, I am taking my cue for relating these two couplets from their alignment on facing pages:

il s'absente		peut-être
il se regarde passer		l'envers de la fable
		(R, pp. 54–5)

It is easy to agree with Emmanuel Hocquard not only on the strong, even violent, sense of dispossession in Claude Royet-Journoud's work, but also on the "Schopenhauer intuition of the identity of the living and dead, an inaptitude of the living to be lived (thought) outside death."⁹

However, what Claude Royet-Journoud articulates in his poems is less an identification of the two states than a constant passage between them. In talking about paring his initial prose down to verse (M), he used the image of a restorer of paintings who finds in a crack, in an accidental feature of the painting, the traces of another painting underneath. So he begins to scratch at the paint, to provoke further accidents in order to reveal, to make legible the hidden painting. But whereas the restorer must choose between the first (accidental surface) and the second (virtual) painting, the poet is interested in the process, the passage from the accidentally given to the virtual image. This analogy for his working process holds also for the passage from life to death, from the accident of being to representation, from words to what the tension between them sets in motion. "You write to give movement" (M), he says quoting St. Augustine to the effect that there is no location, only comings and goings. (He might also have quoted

Whitehead that there are no facts, only events and occurrences.) Now words are "boats" par excellence, ferrying us back and forth between inside and outside, "between sleep and fable" (O, pp. 44, 52), between birth and death. And this traffic, which includes "the traffic / of objects of memory" (O, p. 40) as well as light passing from one "middle" to another (O, p. 78) might just possibly create (or regain) "a place that is neither inside nor outside," but made of passage, and which he calls "pre-birth" ("la pré-naissance," H). Hence also the will to incompleteness that makes him end his last book with the line: "he sets about undoing the whole" (O, p. 93).

Anne-Marie Albiach is also concerned with the interrelation of body, language, and silence. But while only the obstacle seems sure with Claude Royet-Journoud, with Anne-Marie Albiach the body is certainty and matrix. It would not "like to be here," it is. We become aware of her words as of a pulsing of energy, vibrant, and vibrantly female. There are mysterious female presences, "elles," all through *Etat*, unidentified, but powerful as witches.¹⁰ All energy in *Etat* is sexual, if not as overtly as in her first chapbook, *Flammigère*, which opens with "la taille du sexe," the size of the penis (at least I assume it is the penis, size not being much of a factor in the female organ). Still, there are many phrases like "can't // without sensuality" (E, p. 73).

"I live the text as a body," ("je vis le texte comme un corps"), the author says in an interview (AP): literally, as the physical aspect of breath, of Voice (giving body to the "obsessional memory music, the permanent secret opera") and of syntax which, she often stresses, has a physical contiguousness; but also as a body which inscribes its rich "enigma / the imponderables of desire" (E, p. 13), its "inexhaustible novel" (E, p. 29) of drive and impulse, "the pedigree of / thirst" (E, p. 104). Here, words are not just written, they are "engendered" (E, p. 99) by coupling words, and song becomes blaze, or "incantescence" (MV, p. 23).

The discourse only seems abstract, in reality it wants to be concrete, with givens, for example like that of *the fall of a body* . . . it is above all *a poetry of desire* . . . and not even afraid of a certain lyricism or the baroque. (AP, p. 14).

The rapid shift from desire to literary categories, which I find rather funny here, is characteristic of Anne-Marie Albiach's statements.

There will be more examples of how totally her world is a world of texts. (In fact, does not her “concrete given,” the fall of a body, quote Valéry?)

The energy wants to spread, expand, couple, and engender, but is not allowed to, is dammed up. The obstacle? On the thematic level, it is causality, rationality, “logical aridity” (E, p. 115), thinking in terms of geometry, which is strongly present throughout the poem in the vocabulary of angles, measurement, and numbers as well as in the logical articulations, the frequent repetition of “because” and “if.”¹¹ These aspects of the mind, which “have only market value” (E, p. 101), act as censors on mystery and the unconscious, silencing its joys and desires:

nos censures
pour la nudité blanche de la lettre

Cette maturation
et pleinement cadence
un trait d'union

“abaisser la paume sur la luxure des dalles” (E, p. 31)¹²

(This is the whole page; the three groups of lines are more spread out vertically.) The censure in the first line is for the “white nakedness of the letter” (again, a strong suggestion of the letter as a female body). However, the next lines celebrate this body, “this maturation / and fully cadence / a hyphen,” giving us the three terms of organism, song, and grammar with the added advantage in French that the word for hyphen is literally ‘line of union,’ a line that unites and connects. Then, in the final line, “to lower the palm onto the lust of flagstones,” the white body stretched out on the ground becomes a “line of union” indeed, desire overflowing the boundaries of the inanimate, and moving certainly into the baroque.

Here, in the horizontal, “the mysteries might speak” (E, p. 32). But the calculating spirit can even harden the body by perverting its gestures through “knowledge of poses” (E, p. 29), which is the ultimate perversion. Mystery “has no place in this parallel,” but will denounce it and the “military mode of its evolution” (E, p. 38).

But on the level of writing, the obstacle which dams up the energy

only to increase its force by keeping it from dispersing, is the white space and the constant interruption of discourse, as, for instance, when the skewed grammar keeps us from reading lines as continuous. We have already encountered “this maturation / and fully cadence” (E, p. 31) where the adverb instead of the expected adjective alerts us to a caesura, to the erased words in between. Another example would be the beginning of the “Manifesto” (E, p. 37):

la violence	violence
dessinent le drame	are sketched the drama
l'esthétique prend	the aesthetic hardens [takes]
et puissance de gestes	and strength of gesture
	(E, p. 37)

Here it is the third-person plural of the verb (“dessinent,” meaning literally, they sketch, design, outline) which keeps us from a simple, continuous reading. Violence and something else outline drama. It is also ambiguous whether “prend” is used intransitively—the aesthetic sets, hardens—or whether there is another ellipsis: aesthetics takes what? shape? bribes? In either case, though, we have a caesura.

But more important yet is the white space. A strong impression of an earlier, fuller text persists in the pages of *Etat*, of a more coherent argument which spreads to cover the whole page. But most of it has been eaten into by silence, erased, leaving only part of a sentence here and there, broken off more abruptly than in Claude Royet-Journoud's work, the cut edges rough, giving off sparks like live wires. Sometimes only a solitary quotation mark or comma has survived without surrounding words:

It is through the effect of the *white space* that I try to destroy the *given syntax*. To this end I seem to interrupt the discourse, leaving sentences unfinished, *in suspense*. The *white space* intervenes and takes on the form of the unsaid words . . . it projects its own discourse on the page . . . which is an alternate to and yet inherent in the discourse of the text. (AP, p. 15)

Thus she can speak of “syntactical white space” or the “syntactical support” given by the white space. It is not merely negative, but functions as a counterpoint. Hence Anne-Marie Albiach's refusal to see

her work as fragmentary. She speaks instead of “parallel discourses,” of the play of alternation, of “questions and answers that make it all into theater” (AP, p. 17).

What gives the white space its final importance as “*matière constitutionnelle*,” as constituting matter, which it is for her as much as for Edmond Jabès or Claude Royet-Journoud, is that it is directly based on rhythm, hence on breath, on the body: “I calculate *the white space* according to the strength of the text, but also according to that of the breath I have in my body to pronounce this or that word” (AP, p. 14).

The cut, the caesura, imposes a vertical dimension in tension against the natural horizontal tendency of the line—and of the stretched-out body in its heaviness. It also cuts off the expected predications, specifics, explicitness, and opens onto speculations about the parallel strands of non-articulation, of counter-voice, of silent words which could complement the given text, a vertical set of options similar at least in their relation to the given text.

This effect is paradoxical in Anne-Marie Albiach’s work because the linguistic aspect of the vertical, the substitution-sets above every word (with their relation by similarity which is the basis of metaphor), is problematic. Ironically, and quite possibly tongue-in-cheek, she also gives us her attack on analogy in terms of an analogy, an image, that of a falling body:

Etat is the book of a *FALL*, of the loss of verticality. The body on the ground is the prey of grammatical elements or of the “fire,” for example, sustained by adverbs and conjunctions. (AP, p. 16)

The rapid transition from body to grammar may surprise us, but if the text is a body for Anne-Marie Albiach, this is a total *and reversible* identification. The body is text. She is as much caught within the system of language as Claude Royet-Journoud. Even when speaking of a possible political dimension, in the context of the exploitation of the body, she says:

The body is for me a term of writing, tied to images, to discourse, to syntax. It is not a matter of a body as an entity (or monad), but of a body with its grammatical attributes. (AP, p. 16)

Thus the fall in question is clearly the fall from metaphor into the horizontality of contiguity where grammatical elements, connectives like conjunctions and adverbs, are dominant and sustain the “fire” of the writing process, the desire of words for one another.

The religious overtones of a fall from grace are no doubt intended, as is, perhaps, even a pang of regret at the loss of the beauty of images, of what has traditionally been considered poetry. When the “fall” is first mentioned in the poem, it is a “chute en arête,” which punningly evokes a fall backward, a “chute en arrière,” but has the meaning as well of a most uncomfortable “fall onto a ridge,” which I read to represent the austerity of Albiach’s enterprise. That the fall is indeed from metaphor is made explicit in the “Manifesto:”

obtuses dans le sang
que l’on dit métaphore
répandue

obtuse in blood
said to be spilled
metaphor

une délibération
de normes
de formes

a deliberation
of norms
of forms

l’énigme
ainsi surcroît mon regard

the enigma
thus overgrows my view
(E, pp. 37–8)

Metaphor’s blood having been spilled, the vertical having been lost, we find the body stretched out on the ground as we already encountered it earlier. And the horizontal is qualified as an earlier state, an “antecedent.” So the fall, in a reversal of the religious precedent, is a return. (Remember the “chute en arrière” buried under the text.) Horizontal, the mystery of desire joins the mystery of early childhood, but also that of death (“this absence”). Mystery overgrows my eyes, the sense of sight which can operate at the greatest distance, and is therefore most “abstract,” most associated with rationality. Here, in the horizontal, the enigmas could still speak—if it weren’t for “confusion and this absence”:

Antécédent:
l’horizontal

Antecedent:
the horizontal

dans l'énoncé	in the speech
à l'horizontal	horizontally
les énigmes s'énonceraient	enigmas would speak
n'était-ce la confusion	were there not confusion
et cette absence	and this absence
	(E, p. 32)

Also, the body falls not only onto the earth, but *with* the earth, and this trajectory is credited with the possibility of cutting through the subject-object division:

trajectoire de l'objet	trajectory of the object
où la trajectoire	where the trajectory
retrouverait le sujet	would rejoin the subject
	(E, p. 35)

This trajectory is “matter of a different kind” (E, p. 36), because, I speculate, it is the motion of bodies in harmony, horizontal, thus avoiding the hierarchical split of subject and object. Later, the same elements appear in a variant configuration, “The inescapable / destruction / of metaphors” is set in relation first to the important arrival (since written in capital letters) of one of the mysterious “she’s” (“DE SA VENUE”)¹³ and then to simplicity, “extension without relation / by comparisons / for which we have no criterion” (E, p. 57). Of course, we might argue that the relation by contiguity is no more “simple” than that by similarity, but in Anne-Marie Albiach’s text the horizontal extension stays closer to matter, to the body, whereas metaphor has notoriously been our main tool for speculations about the metaphysical for which we have no criterion and which takes us out of our depth. (We should remember the “as above so below” argument, God writing the “Book of Nature,” what Charles Olson called the upward “suck of symbol.”) The true mysteries, for her as for Claude Royet-Journoud, are the mysteries of the literal: “anything evident is mystery for her [or for him]” (“toutes les évidences lui sont mystère,” E, p. 14).

Metaphor is destroyed “for benefit of other / modes / graphisms” (E, pp. 57–8). An example of what these might be appears on page 53 where a “PORTRAIT” is announced and followed by “only an imprint remains.” While we may be reminded of the imprint of the Buddha’s foot, it is more important that, once the body has fallen out

of the verticality of metaphor, the portrait, which is a "likeness" by definition, is replaced by the imprint whose relation to the body is by contiguity: the contact of body and ground (the result of the fall?) and, not likely by accident, the contact of the body of letters with the paper, the imprint that results in the book we are reading (*Etat* is indeed printed letterpress).¹⁴

With the fall from metaphor, the play of associations in the virtual (metaphysical) dimension is curtailed—at least theoretically. With both Royet-Journoud and Albiach, the articulating of relationships by spatial arrangement goes some distance toward non-metaphoric writing, but Albiach's constant caesuras, as we saw earlier, keep reasserting the vertical while seeming to deny it and open the door to speculations about the virtual, non-articulated parts of the discourse. I suspect that she is perfectly aware of this, that she is playful (as in her attack on analogy in terms of an analogy). She, too, knows perfectly well that we cannot escape analogy; that every linguistic act involves *both* selection from the code, the vertical substitution-sets, *and* combination in the horizontal dimension of contiguity; that all we can do is put our *emphasis* more on one axis than on the other. But I also find that, in reading *Etat*, I do not usually stop to speculate on *what* the missing words might be, but rather just take in the *fact* of the interruption, of the silence. I stay with what is physically present: the parallel strands of articulation and non-articulation, of voice and non-voice, of event and silence, the play of alternation which, as the author says, make it all into theater (AP, p. 17).

One last note on this "theater" of writing. Edmond Jabès has written much about the author being rejected by his work (and his work is one of those Anne-Marie Albiach says she writes "in the / reverberations of" (AP, p. 19). In *Etat*, this rejection takes a complex form. The author is as it were "devoured" by the writing, by "the cruel game between language and body, writing and desire. . . . A force comes into being which I desire and which gives birth to a *body of a different kind*" (AP, p. 16). This other body is what plays out the theater on the page, whereas the author becomes a mere spectator, opposite the action ("opposition: je" is the title of a section, E, p. 85). Nowhere in *Etat* can we find a direct first-person statement like the "I scream" ("Je crie") in *Flammigère* (p. 11). The "I" is present, but problematical. It often appears in quotation marks: "'I' persist with the fire" (E, p. 83).

We have already encountered "fire" as the writing process

sustained by elements of grammar, by connectives and conjunctions. The writer persists in playing with fire, for, in writing, "the body risks its own existence" (AP, p. 16), is devoured by, but also persists *with* the fire, is sustained by the very process which devours her. The drama of writing is a ritual. Anne-Marie Albiach mentions an image of Kafka's that has stayed with her: a wrist circled by a gold ring "at the same time scar and ornament: as for the elaboration of sacrificial writing . . . as if the writer were to be sacrificed to the body of the text" (AP, p. 16). It is the wrist, whose movement is the crucial physical basis of writing, that is dressed up for sacrifice. And, with the living author sacrificed to the other body, to the text, we have come full circle: only the sign systems exist; the body is textual. But we have added a religious dimension, even without the help of metaphor and symbol. Language, in atheistic times, is one of the forms of transcendence we have left. Or, to quote the ending of Edmond Jabès's *Return to the Book*: "Man does not exist. God does not exist. The world alone exists through God and man in the open book."¹⁵

NOTES

1. Some of the French poets in question would be Emmanuel Hocquard, Alain Veinstein, Jean Daive, Michel Couturier, Jacqueline Risset, Jacques Roubaud, Joseph Guglielmi.

In the United States, we have witnessed a similar shift of emphasis from metaphor to metonymy, contiguity, syntax in the work of Olson, Creeley, Zukofsky, Guest and, long before them, Gertrude Stein.

Siècle à mains not only helped focus an attitude, but was seminal in a more general way. When it began, in 1963, independent "little" magazines without support of a publishing house or gallery were rare in France. Royet-Journaud was encouraged by the mushrooming magazines and small presses of England and the United States which he encountered in London. By now, Paris bookstores carry magazines like *Première Livraison*, *Verriers*, *La Répétition*, books published by "Orange Export," "Le Collet de Buffle," etc. And a surprising number of the editors will tell you that they have taken their cue from Royet-Journoud's initiative.

2. Cf. Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances, in *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956).

3. Books by Claude Royet-Journoud are cited in the text according to the following abbreviations:

R: *Le renversement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972).

N: *La notion d'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980).

O: *Les objets contiennent l'infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

[In English:

Reversal, trans. Keith Waldrop (Providence: Hellcoal, 1973).

The Notion of Obstacle, trans. Keith Waldrop (Windsor, VT: Awede Press, 1985.)]

The translations throughout are by Keith Waldrop except where I needed an absolutely literal version. Page references are to the French editions.

4. Interview with Mathieu Bénézet, *France Nouvelle* (November 27, 1978); hereafter cited as B.

Other interviews quoted are:

Emmanuel Hocquard, *Action Poétique*, 87 (1982) [trans. G. Young, in *Code of Signals*, ed. M. Palmer, Berkeley: North Atlantic, 1983], hereafter cited as H.

Natacha Michel, *Le Perroquet*, 35 (February 13, 1984); hereafter cited as M.

5. For instance, in *Les Objets contiennent l'infini*: "La bête est dépecée sur-le-champ" (O, p. 17); "quelque chose comme aiguïser un couteau" (O, p. 20); "chaque pièce / comme une mutilation" (O, p. 42); "du mort à la bête dépecée" (O, p. 43); "avancer dans une région étourdissante où l'équarrissage est règle quotidienne" (O, p. 66). Cf. Françoise de Laroque, "La langue et l'équarrisseur," *Action Poétique*, 87 (1982), p. 36 ff.

6. "Entretien avec Anne-Marie Albiach," *Ex*, 4 (1985), p. 54. [English version in *Acts*, 4 (1986)].

Most of the other statements by Albiach are from the interview with Henri Deluy, Joseph Guglielmi, Pierre Rottenberg, *Action Poétique*, 74 (1978); hereafter cited as AP.

7.		wall
		unfinished letter
letter		in the mouth
		of full earth
in the mouth		
of full earth		

8. Emmanuel Hocquard, "Prenez-le vivant," *Critique*, 347 (April 1976), p. 456.

9. Hocquard, *Critique*, p. 456.

