



Chanson Dada: Selected Poems

Tristan Tzara , Lee Harwood (Translator)

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Chanson Dada contains all the poems of legendary Dada poet Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) translated by English poet Lee Harwood. Translated as a labor of love over a ten year period the poems encompass the full range of Tzara's works, the results of which have brought Tzara's poetry to life for English language readers for over 25 years. Completely revised, updated edition of this classic survey.

Chanson Dada: Selected Poems Details

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From Reader Review Chanson Dada: Selected Poems for online ebook

Biscuits says

Tzara the wild man reigns

Greg Bem says

I felt my insides scream and then scram.

Eddie Watkins says

Though I write poetry I'm not one of those poets whose taste in poetry is omnivorous. Plenty of poetry either seems boring and unnecessary, or is too egg-heady and corncob-up-the-buttish, or just gives the appearance of being too egg-heady and corncob-up-the-buttish. And then sometimes it's just too highbrow and self-serious. Basically I just read what I like, some of it academic/conventional some of it far out nonsensical, but I generally prefer the nonsensical that conveys its purpose through energy or mystery or both and is content to be nothing more or less than itself.

It's actually very hard these days to know if certain poetry is simply nonsensical/mysterious or if it's nonsensical/mysterious with a high falutin purpose (political, social, whatever). There have been poems that I've liked for being nonsensical/mysterious and self-contained, but then I read something that tells me the poem is actually a commentary of some big political importance, and then my interest in it shrivels up a little largely because someone else is telling me what the poem means. I don't care if this is a failing of me as a reader.

Tristan Tzara was a fun loving but serious minded poet whose poems have great political importance, though rather than being commentary they present themselves as expressions of anarchic freedom; so instead of focussing on an outward political reality which they attempt to comment on or change the poems focus more on themselves and are actual embodiments of a realistic imaginative reality of personal political freedom. In this way they are much more useful and important to me, and way more fun. I can read and read them and no one can tell me what they mean. Just leave me alone you corncob-up-the-butters!

Tosh says

The more playful the poet is the more I love their work. Tristan Tzara is the king of the playful poets. Nonsense writing on a grand scale that's fun to read out loud as well as seeing it on the printed page. My hero.

On a darker scale this is literature right after World War 1, where logic sort of got lost in the massive amounts of destruction and death. How does one make sense of the great lost in the early 20th Century.

Tzara actually had an answer to all of that. DADA as well.

Paul says

He mentions my name on page 106 & it felt completely unwarranted but I was deeply honored.

Brittany says

this while book made new think of country cities that come from rural parts and turn into suburbia very confusion although im not sure there's anything too understand and maybe u war just thinking that b because I am on as bus in Indiana and there's are as lot of cornfields but we are going to Indianapolis

Allan MacDonell says

I'm not pretending that I understood every poem in this collection of Tristan Tzara's dada musings, or even that I comprehended more than two or three consecutive sentences at any given time. But I don't need to pretend that the simple richness of the language and the fluid, vivid images pushed me forward from poem to poem, with never a notion of abandoning the endeavor and picking up some beloved Robert Frost. Tzara's work at first glance is very specific to a time, a place and a movement. And then about nine or ten poems in, the revelation comes that the time, place and movement is now, and always has been and will be now.

Cooper Renner says

Harwood's essay on dada, included here, is useful and interesting. The poems themselves are mostly not my cup of tea. Some of the humor and nonsense words of dada are quite appealing, but the more usual surrealism of the poems mostly leaves me chilled, if not cold.

Wilbur1 says

Lee Harwood's Introduction and Essay in this collection are good starting points to explore Dada. More a tendency or a shriek than a movement it was a shortlived anarchic backlash to the violence of the 1st World War with explosions of cross cultural events in a number of European cities and New York. It couldn't be a movement because that implies ideological order and inevitably the protagonists fell out with each other in promoting their own versions of poetry, music, chant, art, performance and graphics with an accent on the emotional rather than the rational flow. It reaches into the psyche where Freud and Jung delved. Whilst I find the poetry - and this volume includes a good cross section of Tristan Tzara's work - something of a freak show, its place and Dada's role in the cultural development of the 20th Century is evident. In Dada can be traced the origins of Surrealism and much else besides- the poetry of Breton, Aragon, Eluard and Gascoyne; the art of Magritte, Dali; the films of Bunuel; the Beat writers; the cut outs of William Burroughs and performance art of Bob Cobbing; the influence of African art and music on jazz; Andy Warhol and even the

comedy of Monty Python. And what brought me to this book in the first place - the poetry of Lee Harwood.

Donald Armfield says

The creator of Dada and so I continue.....

Favorites

- *The Dada Review
- *the great lament over my obscurity
- *Springtime
- *Vegetable swallow
- *from Mr AA the antiphilosopher
- *from budding traps
- *from well-digger of looks
- *ambling along
- *acceptance of spring
- *from strays

Poetry off it's rocker...strange but recommended!

Yasmin says

Maybe I'm just dense, but there were a good many poems where I couldn't grasp any kind of meaning--the ones where I did, though, were pretty great

Chris Schaeffer says

Sort of an uneven collection-- some of the very late poems in it are a bit dopey, and it bugged me that it wasn't bilingual. Most of the other boks by this press I've seen are! What's the deal!?

mwpm says

The Dada Review

five black women in a car
have exploded following the five directions of my fingers
when sometimes I place my hand on my breast to pray to god
there's a damp light of old moon birds around my head
the green halo of saints lifted from mental escapes
tralalalalalalalalalalalala

that you now see bursts in the shells

somewhere there's a young man who eats his lungs
he farted so brilliantly that the house became midnight
like a return of birds that's sun about in poems
and death bursting from cannons stops the conversation of vultures
the very large sailingboat opens its book like an angel however
your leaves spring are stuck a fine page of typography
zoumbai zoumbai zoumbai di
I've dealt with all good and evil ah the joy of the general
there's why I put a shroud on each heart and on
each shroud there is our lord and on each lord
there is my heart
my heart I've given it a tip heehee

* * *

Circus

this is only the beginning
my soul a paper flower workshop again
I haven't forgotten my mother however
the last agreement (so favourable)
she would forgive me I think
it's late
you find discordant drum-beats in every corner
if only I could sing
always the same always somewhere
this dazzling light the ants the transparency
bursting out of my guilty hand
I'll leave
the carved wooden madonna is the poster the censure
opaque silence broken by the irregular tick
it's my heart which prolongs the 5th measure
and glory
glimpsed
the velvet curtain after the final march
with the most subtle modulation do you also think of me
four figures on the wall
with the last worry
why search
and there's a ringing which will never end

* * *

cinema calendar of the abstract heart

the fibres give in to your starry warmth
a lamp is called green and sees
carefully stepping into a season of fever
the wind has swept the rivers' magic
and I've perforated the nerve
by the clear frozen lake
has snapped the sabre
but the dance of round terrace tables
shuts in the shock of the marble shudder
new sober

* * *

cinema calendar of the abstract heart

on the white threads of withered midnight
meet waterproof lunatic messenger
bulb rubber women of greenery in
kilometres
the subterranean mesh of the touch

* * *

cinema calendar of the abstract heart

purgatory announces the grand festival
the love policeman who pisses so quickly
cock and ice go to bed under an amorous gaze
large lamp stomachs virgin mary
rue st-jacques the pretty boys set off
towards the bells of the white aorta dawn
the devil's water weeps on my reason

* * *

the great lament over my obscurity

at our house the clock flowers light up and feathers surround the light

the distant sulphur morning cows lick salt lilies
my son
my son

let's always drag by the colour of the world
that looks bluer than the metro and astronomy
we're too thin

we've no mouth
our legs are stiff and knock together
our faces aren't star-like
crystal points on many a fire the mad basilica
burnt: zigzags crack
telephone
to bite the bonds turn to liquid
the arc
to climb
the starry
memory
to the north by its double fruit
like raw flesh
famine fire blood

* * *

retreat

birds childhood ploughs quick
inns
battle at the pyramids
18th brumaire
the cat the cat is saved
entrance
cry
valmy
long live turn red
cry
in the hole trumpet small slow bells
cry
the chapped hands of trees order
cry
to him
post
to the white to the bird
let's cry
you cry
slide

you wear nailed on your scars moon proverbs
tanned moon spread your diaphragm on the horizon
moon eye tanned in a black viscous liquid
vibrations the deafman
heavy animals fleeing in tangent circles
of muscles tar heat
the pipes bend braid
the bowels

blue

* * *

springtime

with your beautiful finger-nails
put the child in the vase in the middle of the night
and the sore
a rose of winds
the thunder in feathers see
an evil water flows with the limbs of the antelope

suffer below have you found cows bird?
the thirst the venom of the peacock in the cage
the king in exile through the clearness of the pit slowly mummifies
in the vegetable garden
sow crushed locusts
plant ants' hearts in the salt fog a lamp drags its tail over the sky
the tiny glitter of glass objects in the bellies of fleeing deer
on the tips of short black branches for a cry

* * *

the condemned

to better conceal his human wreck
from the busy eyes of traders
in souls of unnumerable wrongs in Ithaca
he destroys his travelling kit

when one talks to him of the oiled skins of athletes
the flocks of sheep in shorthand symbols
that his mistress draws in the air with her lashes
his life is chained to the ringing links of holiday

the night is bitter
I know why
it's when the wolf
rubs himself against the stone

there the earth is grinding
and putting the whip-like tracks in order
no chasm's sneers have ever been more trampled
by heavy breasts bust forth on the threshold of your mouth

the arms of planets and flowering torments at the end

by the charred fingers of calls greetings and roots
make the expected irruption through the flames
along fissures that I can only measure by your laughter

by the immeasurable breath that has fled the sun of your laughter.

* * *

Way

what is this road that separates us
across which I hold out the hand of my thoughts
a flower is written at the end of each finger
and the end of the road is a flower which walks with you

* * *

budding traps

in the footsteps that it contrives
the shaggy hill attaches itself to the dark
pain thirst where there's no more room
and can't find itself among the other tracks

no longer knows how to rest in the well of incantations
an anguish breaks the leaf
that on the rare halts a night for the blind
unearths fear

and from the sunny side invisible on my side
another shiver walks over the stones of eyes
with your hands full of blessings
full of worlds that rise in me

bound in the irons of remembrance
in a strangled voice
from one night to the other
without laughing at a life where the impossible fades away

* * *

the well-digger of looks

on the horizon the orisons of life always soar
in disorder
the cork is a deer is a leaf

a bejewelled morning a dress of fluttering hands
that flee the earth
a face that hurries in the night
the anxieties on the shore
a light that wanders without knowing itself
a woman who reluctantly inhabits it
the snow covers it on the forbidden summits
a single shadow finds it
a single one that searches for it that doesn't question
the birth of shadows

* * *

ambling along

the glance's sand
the loose earth
the tower's bark
the exchange of pleasant hills

the first stone
charming octopus
the vines torn off
from the flock of stacks
they're lying

then the low trusting water
and night everywhere
doors banging
unseen hands

the grass sheathed
the voice blocked
the road beheaded
the house buried

everything for you you see
you don't see anything anymore

* * *

strays

I fondly recall
the wool of a childhood
hand in hand
my voice lost

may the opaque
take me as a root
I lose my eyes
through the eyes of leaves

I've left my childhood
to other children
those you'll laugh with
openly

I'll laugh last
deaf and alone
take me by the hand
of soft wool

* * *

For Robert Desnos

in the white of my thoughts
a blackbird howls the grass sings
over the headless town
the sudden wind sighs with the blood
that shakes the seasoned tree
begging for light

Miss would you
and death shows her watch
a bracelet of empty teeth
and bones of a thousand witnesses
Miss would you
the dead wood of strong jaws
softly comes last

at the head only one hope
in the head a forest
through the breaking stars
I've known the melody
that stirs the memory
there's no more resounding voice
in Paris paved with leaves
a summer misses the summons
I'm alone in knowing it

forget your sons your mothers
youth springs
lovers' kisses
golden times

a stark name flutters again
at night round the lamps
and the clenched fist of the towns
reaches up to the heart of the day
this light this revolt
that's offered to passers-by
in the palm of the hand
of the world
in the arms that the waves bear away
a bird nothing more except anger
a face at my window
a joy floats
my secret my ambition
and the world

* * *

the destroyed days

may he talk again what's he secretly saying about the waves
he says just like a word perforated swollen in his head
the world of the explosion seized its bush
here and there cut by a window
where light licks the joy of children

he's taken man back to his roots he said and it's the wind
he said guiding it through the alleyway's blindness
it's a matter of his first steps a slow waltz
goes through it from head to toe
through bursts of holes the ravines start to dance
that's where the reins begin the sound's water breaks
in fits and starts the window-panes march past the trees' slaps
a thousand dogs lap the night fall raids
peruse the immensities of mountains
behind their calm what is there except the hungry letter
bruised torn a new clairvoyance
a clearness of silence shivering on the velvet of strong holds
the void dazzled by a fiery ripple
such is night in the mountains

* * *

end of a summer

a heavy love covered in moss
shares the gold of my thoughts
barrel where memory rings

drunkenness dreams cloudy nights

the sharp sage rouses it
and the fennel mocks it
it pours madness into the wind
where its hair's water sinks

but had madness or sweetness
turned things upside down in my head
it's in turn a single affliction
that comes and goes from day to day
