



## 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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Author : *Tristan Tzara , Lee Harwood (Translator)*

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## From Reader Review Chanson Dada: Selected Poems for online ebook

### **Biscuits says**

Tzara the wild man reigns

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### **Greg Bem says**

I felt my insides scream and then scram.

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### **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-buttters!

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### **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.

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### **Paul says**

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

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### **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

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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!

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### **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

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### **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 books by this press I've seen are! What's the deal!?

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### **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  
tralalalalalalalalalalala

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

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