Guillevic and Jacques Réda as 'Sauvages'

Aaron Prevots

How strongly does a personal presence make itself felt in Guillevic's poems? Do affective yearnings shape his poetry collections and their play of signifiers? I propose to address such questions by examining Guillevic's posthumous long poem *Ce Sauvage* (2010) through the lens of Jacques Réda's *Hors les murs* (1982). As both works date from the 1980s (*Ce Sauvage* 2), they offer a window onto a somewhat lyrical branch of contemporary French poetry, showing these writers to be seekers of modest truths who thrive on discovery of concrete reality and aim to inhabit their surroundings as fully as possible. Through close readings of *Hors les murs* and *Ce Sauvage*, I will consider to what extent poetry is seen as immanent to the world, as a tangible aspect of the real that precedes literary reinscription and in which one can visually and physically rejoice. I will also argue that, by striving to reinsert themselves in the outer world in this way, Guillevic and Réda model an ethical stance, as active, reverential admirers of space and its expressivity. In his essay volume *La Sauvette* (1995), which gathers brief articles on poets' interest in "la totalité du monde et de la vie en perpétuel changement" (8), Réda reminds us moreover of Guillevic's prolificness, bonhomie, and lapidary yet complex voice. He singles out "cet étrange rocher mental et même sentimental qu'on promène parmi les choses, imprécis et instable mais conscient de soi," and, in particular, the "commencements d'échange" suggested by "un bout de bois, un buisson de groseilles" (71). The following analysis will reflect on Guillevic and Réda via this "rocher […] sentimental," noting less the mental "distance" (71) between people and things than ways in which these poets suggest active exploration to be an ideal to which we should aspire. A pivotal aspect of their exploration will

be its energetic side: a tenacious love for the outer world that keeps the poet searching for clues that might attest to and expand this relationship. If both writers are to an extent 'sauvages,' it is often because they devote great attention to understanding everyday life and go beyond the norm in their unremitting solitary efforts. The closing poem of *Ce Sauvage* sums up this dogged determination, on the one hand indicating poetry's ties to mental space in its metaphorical comparison of the poet to trees, and on the other underscoring our bonds with the natural world and our inherent physical as well as mental agility:

> On élague les arbres,
> Ça repousse.
>
> Lui non plus,
> On ne l'a pas eu —
>
> C'est pour cela
> Qu'il reste ce sauvage. (57)

Though Réda generally is more casual than the "Lui" described here, parallels between *Ce Sauvage* and *Hors les murs* cast an intriguing light on French poetry of the last few decades, by validating the real as that which must exist in tandem with textual space and cannot be replaced as a source of intersubjective exchange.

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Hors les murs follows closely on *Les Ruines de Paris* (1977), where, after having focused for a number of years on personal and social disorientation, Réda becomes adept at awakening himself and the reader to "l'exubérance du monde" (*Les Ruines de Paris* 34) in terms of form as much as inherent receptiveness, with lighthearted recognition of the tensions between ego and *l'écriture* (cf. "Notes d'un cingriopathe 495; *Le Vingtième me fatigue*). Réda pays homage to space by means of an overall structure organized around specific areas in the Paris agglomeration, as well as rhymed verse that embodies the assessment of sites in measured

literal or figurative steps while passing through them — what Réda calls "relevés topographiques d[e] lieux parcourus" (*Hors les murs* 111). The sites traveled through in this poetry collection's four sections encompass outlying zones in and around Paris: southern portions of the *rive gauche* ("Le parallèle de Vaugirard"); scattered parts of the *proche banlieue* ("L'année à la périphérie"); the southwestern meanderings of the "Ligne 323"; and a range of "Eaux et forêts" in more or less bucolic settings. The poems reflect on a personal and collective past and bear witness to how ubiquitous housing developments reconfigure landscapes. This second volume by Réda overtly focused on exploring space continues his strategy of allowing tonal contrasts, by juxtaposing commonplace and lyrical images — "poussant ma charrette de mots, / Chineur en proie à l'espérance enveloppante" (43) — or choosing curious rhymes. He crafts poetic experiences related to *l'espace* and *l'épaisseur* and, by interweaving commentary on his ritual outings, performs what Rebecca Solnit calls regarding other peripatetic writers the "conscious cultural act" of making physical exploration "a way to understand self, world, and art" (Solnit 14, 113).

Hors les murs works against stereotypes of the poet as flâneur even while announcing that exploration of space will be its main objective. Forward movement and discovery in all directions take precedence, allowing Réda to carve out a niche of considerable self-effacement as he attends to landscapes' singularities. The narrative 'je' sketches out his travels while noticing, fluidly but with wide-eyed perplexity and surprise, the strangeness of modern life from the viewpoint of, for example, a self seeming to advance "comme un nuage" (52), or an explorer "indifférent aux comment et pourquoi, / Comme un faux vagabond qui râle, qui mendie / L'obole d'un instant d'oubli près des jardins, / Thésaurisant chacun de [s]es pas anodins / Au profit de l'insatiable prosodie" (94). We find Réda deeply absorbed in his surroundings as Guillevic so often is, never ceasing "de chercher, d'attendre" (11), but savoring all manner of details that surge forth before him while he wanders as a *piéton*. Part one of "Deux vues de Javel" takes place in a peripheral location relative to the historical capital, toying with the idea of a ghostly double — in the form of a possibly human "avertisseur d'incendie" — that is absorbed in refining its impartial perception through the filter of "l'état foutu" (9).

Réda utilizes this slight surreality to home in on the appeal of obstinately advancing through the urban wilderness. The determined solitude of this "avertisseur d'incendie" evokes the role of watchperson that the speaker has taken on in admiring the "sens encore plus profond des lois et de l'équilibre" expressed by "le blond céréale du sable en cônes dans les trémies, l'immonde vert roux empoisonné des algues vomies le long des rives, où tout vient se disposer sans art mais à la perfection" (9-10). "Deux vues de Javel" announces space as a subject by confronting us with panoramic views as well as curious, ever so slightly tangential considerations, and by avoiding interpretation of underlying messages beyond the fascinating "fatalité" that orders "le grand rangement" (10). These pages invite us on the slightest of journeys that come full circle, as with the motif of gentle forward motion in space and time set in place by a "péniche" (9) and repeated in the penultimate line in reference to the evening, which likewise advances gently. "Ce qui dévie" (10), that which veers off course, unveils a poetics of "ordre" and "couleurs" (9). The poetic gaze is an intense one, but apt to enjoy meanderings as a gradual and colorful path toward examination of this hidden order.

Réda's wanderings introduce an alluring, absorbing thickness to be found by keeping one's eyes open and senses attuned against even the most ordinary of backdrops. As in the second line of "Deux vues de Javel," where a passing barge sends out waves and counter-waves that "fond[e]nt tout le plomb du fleuve inerte en pan de verre cathédrale" (9), Réda recreates moments of experience where insignificant micro-events merge into a unified, moving whole. The first of his "Deux vues de Vaugirard" (26-8), for instance, reframes the *Les Ruines de Paris* idea of space as a temple (*Les Ruines de Paris* 56) via the image of a minor, kindly god cycling through the sky to prolong the sensation of clouds shifting and implicitly singing:

> […] ma tête a rencontré l'espace
> et ses modulations de nuages en choeurs majestueux,
> où commence à tourner la roue d'un dieu bénin qui passe
> à vélo, pour que cet instant doré se perpétue. (*Hors les murs* 26)

This scene could make the reader picture the speaker elevated in beatific

communion with space, as if his thoughts had raised his head up to the level of the sky to watch clouds like passing traffic. The image of "[l]e ciel où s'illustra Farman" reinforces this possibility, Farman being the first French aviator to fly from city to city, in 1908 (Lucas 1317). Such impressions are intensified by the closing lines' weave of repeated sounds, which turn streaks of colored light and perhaps wind into another sort of majestic choir. At the same time, sounds grouped together in evolving patterns — 's,' 'r,' 'd,' 'v,' 'i,' 'c' — blur the distinction between earth and sky, much as the images blend the human and the elemental:

> Le ciel où s'illustra Farman devient d'iris et de cuivre;
> dans les branches du boulevard Victor rit l'hiver,
> vieux clairon. (27)

Réda sidesteps transcendence by minimizing the importance of the speaker's subjective self, as when winter's laugh ebbs from the sky into the boulevard branches, full of sound and color, "iris" and a brass "clairon." The merest of actions in the outer world constitute the traces that the poem inscribes. Furthermore, these traces occur simultaneously, affect multiple senses, and broaden perception as one pursues them. They are just as likely to appear in the usual places — the sky, branches, "un jardin" — as "sous un amoncellement d'ordures / resplendissantes le soir au bout des rayons allongés," provided one takes on a certain commitment to their comprehension and reinscription as unified and unifying signs, in opposition to the dangerous forces of ennui and pretension represented by "les démons du non-agir, du non-vouloir et du sans nom" (26).

The darker, disconcerting side of space's thickness gets accentuated in "Juillet au quai de la Gare" (33) and "Août à Malakoff" (34-5), which begin "L'année à la périphérie" by depicting liminal urban and suburban zones under eerie conditions reminiscent of early cinematic impressionism and film noir. Their portrayals of space and references to *l'épaisseur* outline the difficulties of finding reassuring coherence amid Paris's people, traffic, and buildings, particularly as one heads toward the greater *banlieue* with its newer and at times foreboding, alienating, overscaled *quartiers*. Réda serves as the suburbs' representative poet in that he documents people observed and moments in time experienced

there, recognizes the strange moods this "désert urbain" (41) can bring on, and finds threads joining Paris's peripheral areas depending on the given day or month's atmosphere, such as the "corde en béton musical" pulsating in the sky "de Clichy vers Asnières" (38). "Juillet au quai de la Gare" signals ways in which liminal zones can resist recuperative, stabilizing readings. Réda underscores the impact of landscape and setting on a semi-anonymous persona, pointing up the dislocated subjectivity that seems to inhabit every corner of an unnerving night along the river's edge, as exemplified by one's name becoming "un hoquet de l'eau noire," and the "lueurs hostiles de copeaux" given off by "[l]es rails qui filent sans bouger à travers la mémoire" (33). In "Août à Malakoff," similarly, an image of misplaced thickness offers a clue to feelings of dislocation that seem to inhabit Malakoff itself as much as any particular individual. When railway power units appear as "cerveaux carrés dans une tête" and "pleins d'épais cumulus / De volts" (34), we see communal memory absent from itself, albeit with overtones slightly less "hostil[es]" (33) thanks to "le moulin de leur musique abstraite" (34). First a "hôtel du malheur, en carton découpé," then "motrices" as "cerveaux carrés" and "[l]ourds boîtiers" full of clouds of electricity, announce the unnerving enclosure in soulless "pavillons cyniques" that the "soir" seems to fear and from which even the moon may want to escape as its "pas s'échappent sur l'asphalte qui s'alune" (34-5). As in "Juillet au quai de la Gare," but more explicitly addressing suburbia, Réda identifies the apparent impossibility of inhabiting a place adequately. In this world without thickness, people are reduced to near-disembodied figures: "un oeil […] [qui] / Scrute," "la voix triste qui ment," "tous les malades du ni oui / Ni non" (34-5).

Réda often ambles along fairly innocently, using his cinematic eye for angles, views, colors, and lighting to track less sinister locales or to encourage empathy, as in "Septembre à Bagneux" where "tout / Peut survenir en douce" (36), or "Octobre à Asnières" when "[u]n ciel d'épais celluloïd" transforms after a tunnel into "l'instant, / Volumineux poisson biblique et bleu" as towers sing "A cappella sur les tons sourds qu'établit la Défense" (38). "Juin à Fontenay-aux-Roses" (52-4), which concludes the section "L'année à la périphérie," highlights Réda's love of space, capacity for merging with his surroundings, and retracing of space through verse and rhyme — what he calls in "Janvier à Montreuil" "l'esplanade

imaginaire que j'arpente" (43). The topography of Fontenay-aux-Roses and the speaker's point of view — from within a public bus climbing high, plunging low, and speeding along "virages" (53) — intensify the impression of discovering this suburban town with its metaphorical "neuf étages de pagode" (52) and not merely strolling through it. Panoramic vision — of the Sacré-Coeur, Suresnes, and Argenteuil — broadens the poem's reach outward to allow an embrace of space's continuous motion, its "branle perpétuel" (52). The particular sort of embrace includes the Rédean trope of encountering space (cf. 26-7), expressed here as advancing "comme un nuage," as well as drifting from hilltop to path to tower and becoming space in its many guises: "et je deviens nuages et ravin, / Plaine et colline, ville et garenne, et je sens ce / Monde en métamorphose qui m'avale" (52). However, numerous devices ensure that we will recognize "Juin à Fontenay-aux-Roses" as only "une vague ode," one meant more to indicate the pleasure of interacting with the world than to claim special knowledge, which resembles merely "l'ébriété d'un vin / Léger" and, in a lighthearted rebuttal of "Lao- / / Tseu," does not lead "bien loin" (52). The use of verse and rhyme targets this paradoxical divide in *Hors les murs* between taking the pulse of space and time within carefully measured structures and downplaying objectives beyond movement itself. The stanzas advance the gaze from one setting to the next without settling into a coherent scene, much like the "signes à la craie" seen from the bus that are erased "à mesure avant qu'on les ait lus" (53). Poet and reader alike are the "jardiniers" who find solace in the slightly out of place, happiness in the "féerie / Orageuse de la saison déjà pourrie" (54). A wide range of line endings within the ABBAB structure, from the rich rhyme "contrées" / "éventrées," to the near rhyme "grésil" / "après il," to the mosaic rhyme "La connaissance" / "et je sens ce" (52-3), keep the poem crackling with life and mirror thematic nuances. Réda encourages spiritual renewal by crafting poems in which we accompany him, taking our place alongside an observer of physical space who values the texture of words as a framework for transcribing a given trajectory but avoids interpreting his own actions too deeply.

A handful of poems in *Hors les murs* take an aggressive stance, using the text's arc to point out suburban architectural missteps or urbanists' misunderstanding of open space. Réda avoids diatribe, allowing

an occasional phrase that points out a social problem or laments a strange twist of fate brought on by so-called progress. The poem "Gentilly" (65-6) measures out small doses of aggression and sadness, in scenes indicative of space's "défaillance":

> L'espace de nouveau pris d'une défaillance
> Titube au carrefour dit des Quatre-Chemins
> Et se brise en éclats de verre et de faïence
> Contre un mur où j'avance à l'ombre des moulins
>
> Vers des lointains d'étangs et de forêts. (65)

The speaker notices as he advances this metaphorical weakening of space, commenting on his deception through a series of images where the forms made of concrete replace nature and become a soulless, discordant backdrop: the universe's "rébus," represented by this public wall painting "fait de bric et de broc" and Gentilly's odd mix of "Derniers vergers un peu déments," "Lourds redans envahis de sureaux qui blanchissent / Comme la fleur fantomatique des canons," and towers in the northern distance (65-6). The harm done to the panoramic "vallée" takes shape on the page, where, rather than accuse any particular party, the poem situates us within an "orée indécise," what one could call the undefined new beginning of this "crête […] / Enterrée entre les dalles des H.L.M.," from which "la Bièvre" is less visible (65). After several serpentine sentences, the poem comes full circle in the last two lines, when we learn the speaker has been both distracted from the space he truly wanted to see and concerned about space's actual, visceral breakdown as the suburban cityscape crowds out the once free waters of "la Bièvre": "Rien ne me distrait plus du sort de cette eau libre / Qu'on a salie et qui sanglote en se cachant" (66). Réda flags for the reader the perils of *banlieue* existence when the natural world's continuity goes missing. We get a firsthand understanding of space's plight, and possibly that of the inhabitants of Gentilly: love of space is blocked by the hesitancy and confusion that reign in the absence of true points of reference. The poem's epiphany revolves around natural space and its artificial counterpart locked in an unfortunate tension where one can only ask, "Lequel méduse l'autre, et

lequel s'exorcise […]?" (65). Unable to merge with space, the speaker formulates regrets in a manner not unlike "la fleur fantomatique des canons" (66) that commemorates the sorrow of loss during battle.

The final section of *Hors les murs*, "Eaux et forêts" (81-108), goes further in mourning tensions between glorious, bucolic points in space and a hostile takeover of space that cannot quite be countered. Many of these poems "rend[ent] hommage" (103) to space and the "*offrande perpétuelle*" of its natural elements such as "*rus*" (104-5) by guiding the reader through its suburban layers and forms in areas outside the capital where new construction blights a generally tranquil past. A handful of poems lend a quarrelsome note to these last pages and thus foreground the dialectic between needing space as a companion and being helpless against the forces of change that alter it. "Verrières-le-Buisson" (85-6), for example, which tracks the Bièvre southwest from Paris and Gentilly, contrasts the beauty of the commune's woods with the howl of traffic, Réda as a "[p]auvre brindille au bord du ruisseau des Buats" with the "épouvante" of motorists' "plainte effilochée." The idea of "[l]'espace massacré" takes on added weight in the tightly grouped rhymed phrases that oppose the "faux toits paysans" of freshly minted "VILLAGE[S] VÉRITABLE[S]," the "autoroute" with its "retable / De ronflements," and a "boqueteau sacré" (85). The copse offers a sanctuary, but "la divinité qui l'habite" intensely dislikes "tous les mortels qu'on motorise" (85). A similar dark humor seeps into "Bièvres" (87-8), where the couplets establish first the monotony of life by the woods that gives inhabitants "un air / Xénophobe," then the bizarre clash of two equally drab civilizations:

> Tout au fond la Zone insolente se pavane
> Dans son rafistolage entre deux bras du ru
> Baignant impartiaux le gazon neuf et cru
> De villas où s'étouffe un bridge hebdomadaire.
> Des petits ponts à balustrade confédèrent
> Ces univers de la tondeuse et du clapier
> Qui s'entendent dans les taillis pour vous épier […] (87)

In "Bièvres" as in "Verrières-le-Buisson," suburban space could be said to reject the passerby when local inhabitants lose respect for natural beauty

and focus instead on a routine that ensures personal survival. The A86 highway — "l'autoroute aux courbes algébriques" (87) — plays a particular role in both poems, as an impediment to aimless wandering and a reminder of aspects of progress that bring confusion and disease and can make us lose sight of what is sacred in our surroundings. The last lines of the poem "Bièvres" juxtapose all manner of ills — the highway, "une eau couleur de fièvre," "un chien brocanteur à l'oeil retors" — with disinterest in local landmarks: "Nul ne sait plus dans quels pays luisent la Bièvre / Et le pelage fabuleux de ses castors" (88). In short, the vitriol that lurks beneath the poems' surface is believable because it corresponds to an actual physical and emotional trajectory that Réda commemorates, but its effects are at the same time mitigated by a love of space and a desire to still see it glimmer.

Most poems in "Eaux et forêts" that strike a balance between criticism and optimism do so through anchoring in a more or less tangible trajectory, as if to tell us a love of space is best realized through direct, repeated contact with the real. The final poem in two parts, "Exode," sacralizes space first in this usual manner, in "Itteville" (106-7), and then, in "Palaiseau" (107-8), in a freer style likely inspired by Pierre Oster, to whom "Palaiseau" is dedicated. Both poems humanize space, as a person unable to fathom why it is being sold off, imprisoned, sent away so that new construction can indifferently take its place. Their attacks on the generally deplorable "métamorphoses du paysage suburbain" (112) highlight Réda's frustration at being too radically separated from the companion he knows so well and that has so generously accompanied him. They end *Hors les murs* on a decidedly cynical note, yet through techniques that help us to inhabit space nonetheless, to feel space's proverbial pain as if from within its own sensory conscience. The poem "Itteville" combines a rural setting, an absence of a narrative 'je,' and carefully orchestrated fourteen-syllable lines to immerse the reader in open space and help us follow it in our mind's eye as it wanders. A simple initial image of a "maison du garde-barrière" for sale and the ways in which open space lingers thereafter set up the idea of not knowing "si l'espace a compris / Qu'on la mis en vente à son tour à n'importe quel prix" (106). The relatively straightforward complaint that space has in general become a commodity, locked in cages like the tigers of the Saint-

Vrain zoological park (since closed), enters into creative tension with the uniquely nuanced unfolding of presence: the poem's overlapping sonorities and images situate us within space's dynamic movement and expansion, pointing to the sadness of "bâtisses / À l'abandon" while also urging us to pause and absorb the vastness of the path, swamps, fields, and forests as "l'hiver ouvre sa maison vide" (106). Réda feels anger at seeing space at once beautiful and exiled (cf. 107), full of promise and not quite at home. Triplet rhythms in the line "Les notes d'une passacaille intense de corbeaux" recreate the birds' vigorous movement even as the accompanying verb "fourmillent" connotes excess and a similar disorientation (106). "Itteville" traces loss experienced as if from within the natural spaces that are being given over to presumed development. Without learning to whom the "on" of "on l'a mis en vente" refers, we sense, both as passersby and as "l'Essonne / Et la Juine" (106-7) that border Itteville might, the unsettling reality of rural sites being abandoned and losing the unspoken warmth that regular contact with people once brought them.

"Palaiseau," meanwhile, targets in still stronger terms the trend of metaphorically hounding, disfiguring, and exiling space mentioned previously in "Juin à Fontenay-aux-Roses," "Verrières-le-Buisson," and "Itteville." "Palaiseau" caps Réda's tour of the Île-de-France region with a stop in a town just at the upper crest of a triangle formed by the A10 and A6 *autoroutes*, one with closer ties to Paris and *banlieue* expansion than Itteville, as well as a singular "grandeur" (108) thanks to the Yvette river, the vallée de Chevreuse, and the dramatic relief of the plateau de Saclay. "Palaiseau" continues "Itteville" by accentuating straightaway space's incomprehension of urban attacks on its integrity: "Non l'espace n'arrive pas à comprendre pourquoi de toutes parts on s'acharne, c'est le mot, à le traquer et parquer en entrepôts" (107). The unusual structure and angry, aggressive imagery make this one of Réda's few overtly vitriolic poems of this period, with only a briefly bucolic ending to offset the misery described, but the paragraph-like form and abrupt transitions between sections match the function of conveying space's anguished, tribe-like exodus from one of the city's building sites. "Palaiseau" fits well into the overall fabric of *Hors les murs*, particularly as a contrast to previous poems where the speaker can "rêve[r] d'eaux encore libres qui jubilent"

such as l'Orge and l'Yvette (102), or have enough space before him to be absorbed in the sun's transitions across the horizon (cf. 105).

Key to "Palaiseau" are its many images strung together in long series and the way in which they portray space's tortuous flight. Like Baudelaire's swan, "l'espace" (107) wanders haggardly through the city full of reproach, unable to grasp the age's spiritual aridity. Conversely, the sky is hardly visible: it appears as mere "piles de ciel en boîte" penned up in "entrepôts"; "tout ce mobilier de conjuration de séisme" likely blocks it out; and "les longs doigts pleins d'ongles des ponts" threaten to rejoin the clouds and leave space with no escape route other than to "foncer vers le sud" (106-7). The paragraph-like verses that fill with clauses share a message about the fast-changing city by mimicking the construction materials piled up in this "catastroph[e]"— like wasteland from which space must flee, as if it were "une vieille tribu dépenaillée," before the "opiniâtres commencent à creuser" (107). The "on" that listens to the silence appears helpless against the "on" that expels and strangles space, while the "couples de promeneurs aux faces roses de pilules" add to the sense that, amid the agitation and numbness that modern progress engenders, at best Disney's "Donald et […] Pluto" might feel at home (106). Whereas Baudelaire's "Le Cygne" describes the exile of "mon esprit" to a forest within which "Un vieux Souvenir" resounds (*Les Fleurs du mal* 213), Réda's "Palaiseau" opts for an impersonal "on" burying itself in a rather more sensual "verger triangulaire" where nature's contentedness can belong to anyone and everyone in a diffuse and perhaps radiant here and now: "Ainsi / ce verger triangulaire où l'on s'enfouit entre des poiriers bas et de l'herbe quand même confusément heureuse, profonde comme l'oubli, profonde comme la mémoire quand elle n'est plus celle de personne" (107). Réda rails against the pace of change, but overall prioritizes celebrating the promise of social cohesion that presents itself when we do in fact merge with a whole greater than ourselves, as in this natural site with its "poiriers bas" and "herbe quand même confusément heureuse." His remapping of the sacred involves a flight that is a movement toward some element of future promise, a "cheminement" (Parent f2) on his part that encourages conscious movement through the world on ours.

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Guillevic's *Ce Sauvage*, similarly, tells of intense contact with the outer world. It addresses this topic gradually, suggesting the singular courses of action that set the poet apart as a seeker engaged in writing in order to comprehend the world, the self, and the intersubjective relationships between them that make for a unified whole. Though less easily situated in space and time as compared to Réda, he professes an equally intense gaze as concerns what he calls at the beginning of *Ce Sauvage* each "page blanche / Pas vierge d'écriture, / / Mais avec de grandes marges" (5). Amid the resonant silences of the "page blanche" that could valorize the poem's literary dimension, the human side of the speaker's concerns emerges consistently in subsquent pages and moves toward what Lucie Albertini-Guillevic calls Guillevic's lifelong "'creusement' persévérant de l'exploration de l' 'ici-maintenant' d'un réel concret et palpable" (59). A striking initial parallel exists between *Ce Sauvage* and *Hors les murs* in the way both poets lay claim to outsider status in order to balance observations of the self with what is seen. If we read in full the opening poem cited above, for example, an ambiguity opens onto separate but complementary readings: "Il est une page blanche / Pas vierge d'écriture, / / Mais avec de grandes marges" (5). The subject and verb combination "Il est" tells us as an impersonal formula that 'there exists' a white page at the inception of each similar book of poetry; however, it also tells us as a direct personal form that the speaker is himself this "Il," always welcoming the unfolding of beings and things when they crystallize as words within the book's "grandes marges." Several other poems work in this latter direction, as if to say a certain humility and receptivity are prerequisite to celebrating the real: "Il a assez vécu / Pour savoir-vivre / Hors de son malheur" (6); "Il ne s'en veut pas / De n'en vouloir / À presque personne" (9); "Rien ne le prédispose / À n'offrir que sa bonté / À ses poursuivants" (10). To slightly comic effect, Réda employs such a distancing device when comparing himself in the first poem of *Hors les murs* to an "avertisseur d'incendie" that, through the filter of "l'état foutu," steers clear of "la tristesse" and refines its impartial perception of "le grand rangement" (9-10). In both cases, there is the implication that impersonality is necessary, but only by degrees so that

ties to being and things in the outer world can continue to grow. Moreover, the potential self-parody of Réda's comments regarding the poet-observer resembling an "avertisseur" (10) diminishes when compared to the following poem in *Ce Sauvage*: "Il sait se conduire / Assez pour que jamais / On ne le devine" (26). In sum, Réda and Guillevic rely on various strategies to ensure connection to the real, among them incorporation of a human presence, distancing effects that minimize potential accusations of effusiveness or sentiment, and subtle assertions that the poet's ties to the real are inexhaustible.

Ce Sauvage also includes surprise as a strategy. Much as Réda moves in the second part of "Deux vues de Javel" from wonder at his continual seeking and waiting, to a possible response to the question "Qu'est-ce qui me réclame?" in the form of "[d]es gouttes souples comme des pattes de chat," a "noir courant d'air" and, eventually, "la septuple extase d'un arc-en-ciel" (*Hors les murs* 11), Guillevic uses surprise to at once pursue ties to beings and things and downplay his poems' lyrical side. The third poem of *Ce Sauvage* recounts the wonder of poetic dwelling, even as it defuses feelings of awe by implying the presence of a desire to remain "simple":

> Que tant de choses
> L'habitent,
>
> Il n'en revient pas.
>
> Il se croyait
> Beaucoup plus simple. (7)

In these brief lines of mostly two and four syllables, the isolated pentasyllable "Il n'en revient pas" could be said to give added weight to the speaker's surprise. At the same time, the overall groupings of six and eight syllables in the first and last couplets maintain the dialectical tensions between the speaker's preconceptions and what inhabits him. The structure around this central line implies ellipses, in terms of the things that coincide with the human world being "tant," or in excess, as well as the speaker having believed himself to be more independent of their pull

on him and needing to rethink his permeability to the world. Another poem employs a more direct contrast, stating first that each morning brings new sensual and affective pleasures, then that worry arrives in equal measure: "Il n'a pas épuisé / Les délices de l'aube, / / Ni les angoisses d'avant le petit matin" (22). Again, the impact of the speaker's surprise lies in its being balanced by other, perhaps commonplace details, as well as a poetic structure that reinforces the various tensions — here, two lines of six syllables followed by an alexandrine. Guillevic highlights a particular frame of mind appropriate to putting oneself in contact with the real: the absence of a predetermined stance, and thus the ability to let beings and things unfold organically, without the impositions of human will. By incorporating surprise and simultaneously softening its impact, he fashions a trustworthy voice that avoids the hieratic and the overtly lyrical yet still expresses profound love.

Indeed, this volume conveys a singular love of space across several emblematic manifestations: clouds, the sea, the horizon, a "rose" (23), a "terrier" (17, 30), an "étang" (41, 52). Where Réda is clearly a wanderer and relaxed about introducing in *Hors les murs* a subjective 'je,' Guillevic relies on a less anchored poetic gaze in *Ce Sauvage* and consistently refers to a third-person "Il." Both poets find the means to stay human and personable, to admire their surroundings even as they depict the spatial thickness with which at times they identify. If poetry is immanent to the world, it thrills us in *Ce Sauvage* especially when a happy confusion of sorts obtains between the world and the self. In one poem about clouds, for example, the speaker feels praiseworthy because he sees clouds moving: "Il se fait / Des preuves de sa gloire, / / Rien qu'avec / Des mouvements de nuages" (13). This poem could be comparing the written and visual poetic act to clouds' movement, as a unifying gathering of traces. It also ties earth and sky through the logic it reflects: in seeing the workings of nature, the writer understands that he too works toward an embrace of finitude. There may also be a darker undertone: the irony that the poet perhaps should not proclaim any "gloire," given how separate and distant the clouds are in their representation of time and space passing. A significant part of understanding these poems involves recognizing how they explore relationships. Another cloud-related poem, for instance, goes

a step further in the way it rejoices in the natural world while acknowledging human innocence:

> Il voudrait avoir
> Une espèce de crochet
> Long, très long —
>
> Pour avec lui aller accrocher
> Il ne sait quoi
>
> Dans l'azur,
> Parmi les nuages
> Et plus loin. (54)

The speaker wants to forge ties to space, and does so to an extent through the poem's "crochet"-like form, but he admits that he does not exactly know what he should expect to find. The images portray active work toward the building of thickness, but also show the context of human frailty — the mere "espèce de crochet" meant to clasp "Il ne sait quoi" — within which this takes place. As in Réda's poem "Juin à Fontenay-aux-Roses," which involves traversing a town by bus, we see that space can be energizing but take care to accept the precariousness of our journey through it.

Whereas *Hors les murs* often focuses on movement itself, *Ce Sauvage* typically prioritizes thought pauses: we sense the thickness of concrete reality through the brief scenes described and the speaker's passionate relationship with the natural world. As regards the sea and the horizon, a series of poems early in the collection illuminates the dynamic interchange between inner and outer worlds that so enlivens *Ce Sauvage* and gives it commonalities with *Hors les murs* despite differences of voice and style. As with the aforementioned attraction to clouds, the contrast between a minimalist aesthetic and generous poetic vision makes the evolving exchange between man and nature unusually expansive. Because we must imagine more intensely, the reader is drawn just as strongly into this relationship between inner and outer worlds as in Réda, where fuller rhythms and networks of phrases achieve a similar end. The slight,

gestural approach of these next three poems exemplifies Guillevic's unique embrace of nature as a mutual reaching out:

Depuis sa chambre,

Il voit l'océan
Se dresser vers lui. (14)

Il tend la main
Au bras de mer

Pour à eux deux
Apaiser la presqu'île. (15)

Il s'invente lui-même

À l'image des rochers,
Des fleurs, de l'épervier,
De la taupe, du poulpe. (16)

In all these instances, the line break intensifies the gaze, allows for literal and metaphorical inspiration whereby breathing in stimulates creative awareness, and signals the elements' reaching out to the speaker in a manner similar to his figuratively reaching out to them. Brevity gives each group of sounds — particularly the repetition of 'p,' 'b,' and 'd' — greater spatial and aural density and suggestiveness, allowing them to embody the materiality of the referents and the speaker's ties to them. On page 14, the layered repetition of consonants and vowels — "Depuis […] dresser […] lui" — makes for a unified scene, wherein slight waves of sound can combine to connote the singularity of an entire ocean rising toward the speaker. On page 15, the soundscape and visual outlay add similar unity to what could otherwise amount to a mere play on words, i.e., holding out one's hand to an arm of the sea. The poem on page 16 paints in still broader strokes, via its curious assemblage of beings and things projecting qualities that the speaker wishes to emulate. Whether in the mind's eye or directed at diverse points on the horizon, correlating two entities or many

through a single vision or several images joined, Guillevic's focused gaze opens onto a resonant horizon where the imbrication of words and images creates a whole far greater than the small sum of parts. At its most generous, this gaze weds the human with elemental, such that the resulting intersubjective relationship appears to be as basic as it is essential.

Inevitably, of course, this intersubjective exchange turns all the more believable and ethically valid for its ups and downs, its turmoil and dilemmas. As is the case with Réda, observation of concrete reality points a way forward amid inevitable change. Textual resonances with the ordinary backdrop of the real as their point of departure feed the soul as well as the cogito, to singular effect when darkness and ambiguities surface. In the next example, the outer world takes on a striking thickness, but with added nuance as to the interactions that result. Whereas in the poems just discussed an exchange anchored in a present moment of vision is implicit, in this subsequent text a broad future-oriented movement appears: "Ce sentier — / Jusqu'au lieu / / Où l'horizon / Paraît l'appeler" (18). Each aspect of this poem indicates a progression: we move from a path, to a place, to the horizon, to the call that "[p]araît l'appeler." Despite the deictic "Ce" and the philosophical resonance of the speaker and the reader being guided forward along a path, the earth-sky unity is ambiguous for several reasons: we know very little about the "sentier" and the "horizon," and as a result the circumstance becomes more metaphorical than literal; the forward movement, though beguiling in that it leads to the feeling of being beckoned, remains uncertain due to the verb "[p]araît"; one cannot say for sure whether the object pronoun "l'" refers to a person or perhaps the path itself, being called out to by the horizon as a fellow pathway; and, if one does assume it is the speaker that the horizon appears to beckon, then one wonders what metaphoric presence is implied — time, space, death, Being, God, the gods. In brief, nature and thought intertwine as dual trajectories. In traversing space, the speaker also invites the reader to traverse the realm of ideas. As with Réda, exploring the natural world and understanding the arc of the speaker's utterances inform the inscription of thought on the page, adding human and elemental sides to the ambiguities of the text.

Several poems bear mention as part of this Guillevician horizon that melds inner and outer worlds and thus underscores the close

interaction of these two realms. At times, these texts resemble zen koans in their indeterminacy, exposition of atypical actions or states, and intimation that enlightenment can be attained by confronting just such an enigma. We get to know the speaker, and better understand the ties he feels to the outer world and how they guide him, even when he speaks in riddles that require interpretive discernment. An echo of the previous horizon poem, for example, includes a violent turn that proves to be appeasing: "Il n'a jamais rêvé / De poignarder, / / Même pas les ventricules / De la pire des nuits" (19). On the one hand, metaphorical darkness can be a source of anguish; on the other, the refusal to stab this heart of darkness could be a reiteration of the idea that the horizon, whether by day or by night, always holds out future promise. Reading across poems in this manner proves useful on a subsequent page regarding shallows, where darkness and sediment are a source of inspiration:

> Il ne ratisse pas
> Les bas-fonds.
>
> Il s'en sert
> Comme de tremplins. (21)

This parable gathers layers of meaning through its anchoring in nature as well as obscure parts of the psyche and its relevance to other texts in *Ce Sauvage* about darkness, difficulty, and that which in our thoughts remains unclear. Three poems about crying out likewise fill in blanks about what on the surface could be mere statements about turmoil and unrest. Read together with the various poems mentioned above, they tell a story of fruitful intersubjective exchange between the self and that which lies outside the self, the latter as a motivating force:

> Il n'a été qu'un cri —
>
> Dans la mesure
> Où c'est possible. (25)
>
> Avant qu'il ne se couche

Il crie au soleil combien
Il a besoin de lui. (51)

Tayaut! Tayaut!

C'est un cri
Qu'il entend souvent
S'acharner vers lui,

Et il ne voit là
Personne. (47)

These poems allow one to infer a back and forth exchange, almost a call and response wherein the speaker notices the intensity of life in his surroundings and wants to emulate the strength and "acharne[ment]" he sees. They show how, though in smaller, more cautious steps than Réda, Guillevic pursues a trajectory through the world and encourages us to do the same. He sees he is an outsider — as in the line "Il n'a été qu'un cri" and in the hunters' call "Tayaut!" —, but attains spiritual renewal by observing and interacting with the elements, as when "Il crie au soleil combien / Il a besoin de lui."

This journey is not without its tenderly ironic moments, where Guillevic gently chides himself or describes troublesome situations with true warmth. A poem on "La rose" blames the self for the rose's silence:

Si
Devant lui ce matin
La rose est muette

Il n'accuse que lui. (23)

Beyond the endearing sentiment of noticing beauty by way of a rose, this poem catches our attention thanks to a reversal: if the rose does not communicate beauty, the speaker is at fault for not having done his part to maintain their relationship, to recognize what it might have to say. At the same time, the poet has accomplished something by acknowledging this

weakness in himself and taking steps to counteract it. The portrait of his awkwardness rings true when we consider the rose's immediacy there "[d]evant lui," and the tension is eased by the *comptine*-like form with its short lines and repetition of 'u' and 'i' sounds. This view of nature is a journey inward, to where each of us bears responsibility for beings and things as well as for the Being, within its context of finitude, that underlies beauty. Elsewhere, Guillevic limns the real with green, describing the passing beauty of "la vue de la verdure" as a "certitude" that eases agony in the same way as a human touch (33); in a similar instance, he describes taking responsibility for the "vert de la prairie" (32). Such notions of responsibility taken through seeing and saying link Guillevic and Réda as poets keenly attached to the real and concerned to make its intensity endure. These poems on the cry and on natural beauty demonstrate, however, an intriguing difference: while Réda works in *Hors les murs* to preserve space and can seem a devotee of the rural past in his adoration of open vistas, Guillevic directs his energies in *Ce Sauvage* toward situating himself as a human being within what he sees. Whereas Réda's primary aim in *Hors les murs* is to encourage respect of space so that humans might dwell more poetically, Guillevic dwells poetically in *Ce Sauvage* by looking to concrete reality to understand both the outer world and the speaker's self in its ambitions and frailties.

One poem hints at Guillevic's wariness of nature as a Romantic topos by regretting that he would risk sounding silly — and may well be too old for — proclaiming interest in the bounty of a "Ciel accrochant / Et le bois et le reste" (29). Such sentiments are in line with two poems relating to animals that set into relief in almost comic terms the distinction that Guillevic may admire what he sees, but focuses more on staying grounded, in part by directing his attention to maintaining contact with the real rather than waxing effusive. A self-portrait early in *Ce Sauvage* reflects the writer's inclination to not just maintain contact with the real, but actually hide within it:

> Quand il pense à lui
> C'est dans son terrier
> Qu'il se voit.

Pourtant, il lui arrive
De se retirer
Dans un taillis,

Dans un hallier,
Dans un buisson. (17)

At first blush, the image of the poet in a "terrier" — the burrow, hole, or lair of an animal that lives in the wild — points up a tendency to prefer solitude and the warmth of one's own thoughts for protection. The subsequent images, however, indicate a different kind of hermeticism: comfort within that which grows together with other things, i.e., groups of trees, brushes, or shrubs. Thus, in his own way Guillevic would appear to value the Romantic ideal of solitude within nature, with the proviso that he does not want to be seen as taking himself too seriously; as a writer, he will always find some new shelter so that others will not immediately identify him as too closely resembling anyone else. A subsequent poem paints a similar portrait in terms that bring out the paradox of being alone, but within nature: the speaker leaves his "terrier" and "[l]'emporte avec lui" (30). Other, less comic poems clarify at least one aspect of this dilemma, namely the fragility, modesty, and humility that prevent grander gestures from entering the frame in which he portrays his ties to the outer world. For example, "Il" sees himself not as a "mur" or a "pylône" sitting majestically within a "paysage," but rather as a "Scarabée / Dans une ornière" (53). He is "[p]as assez griffu" (12) to angrily confront himself, could never defend himself "[à] la façon des crabes" (27), and should a fly decide to bother him, "Le plus simplement du monde, / Il s'en défera" (40). We see more and more how Guillevic can be characterized as a 'sauvage': in addition to seeking out contact with the elements and locating intersubjective exchange within this framework, he draws on comparisons with the natural world to express his personal weaknesses, including his singular obsession with communicating through an aesthetic form that requires solitude.

A few last images concerning water will provide fitting closure to this comparison of Guillevic to Réda. If we keep in mind that Réda thinks of rivers and streams as the most faithful of companions whom society has

alas corrupted, then we will better grasp in closing how in *Ce Sauvage* Guillevic inhabits the outer world with equal fervor but as a means of looking through an otherwise dark mirror, one that reflects far more the self's battles than landscapes' sufferings and the social ills that accompany them. This may also be a reason for the volume's posthumous publication. To wit: having seen water "Chercher / À vouloir tout remplir," the speaker realizes that "il s'est retiré," without quite knowing into what he has withdrawn or where he has taken refuge (45); he realizes he has been perhaps no more than "un étang, / / Qu'il en est resté là" (41); each time he watches "la vague" tirelessly for long stretches of time, "Il n'en saura guère plus / Sur ce qu'il a de commun avec elle" (42). Guillevic looks to the outer world with the tenderest of poetic gazes, but resists the dissolution of self toward which Réda is drawn. His task is to "*s'incrire* dans le monde," to "vivre [s]es rapports à l'autre" (VP 176, 255); however, doing so simultaneously sheds light on his own "labyrinthes" (I 208). Finally, yet another subtlety emerges upon examination of Guillevic's creative process in *Ce Sauvage*. As much as he strives for connection to the real, each poem serves as the temporary guarantee of an underlying relational structure, more so than that in which he immerses himself. With Guillevic, it is "peu de choses" — rather than the world's abundance — that makes the instant worth savoring as it passes:

Il voudrait être tuile
Sur un toit tranquille.

Ce n'est pas pour la rime,
C'est qu'il veut laisser

Sur lui couler le temps,
Les choses, peu de choses —

Ou le laisser se casser
En plusieurs morceaux,

Sur un toit tranquille —
Et repartir. (43)

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