

THE MAGRITTE POEMS

a sample from the first 100 poems

Not to be Reproduced

Shown from the back
the image is androgynous - think
k.d.lang in her man's suit
phase. It is a portrait of the artist
as a young (wo)man. It is not
a portrait of the artist. Magritte says
it is not to be reproduced
though he reproduces it
anyway. We do not see
the face. Magritte does not
produce it. Or reproduce it.
Is not reflected in the mirror
for what comes back from there
is not mirror-image
but reproduction. Almost as if
we were peering over a shoulder
only to see the shoulder that we
were peering over. But it is
reflection. The mantelpiece
is reflected & the copy of
Edgar Allan Poe's *Adventures
of Arthur Gordon Pym* that rests
upon it is partially reflected. It
is a book about an imaginary
journey. Magritte's painting
is a journey of imagination
about what happens between
two points that are the same point
though there is distance
between them. He says it is not to be
reproduced. It is reproduced here.

Le Voleur

The hot air balloon has been stolen from another painting; as have the river & the hills it weaves between. Then there's the curtain which has been on show so many times that it would otherwise appear threadbare were it not for the wardrobes full of similar things — taken from clotheslines & salons & a number of theaters — which are easy to switch between. Now focus on the thief himself, who, out in public & with an eye to propriety, has foregone the purloined jacket worn in tense times past — including *le présent* — on the off chance he might just come across its owner.

The Emergence

"Put it into perspective," the *fado* singer says as the white bird wheels away & takes the daytime with it. "Except for the stars, the sky will be empty now for several hours; & though having a supposed symbol of hope around might at first seem comforting, grief is best left to emerge when one is in the open or beside the sea. Clean, simple. No melodrama."

La Veillée

A lighted candle & holder cut from a music score. *Papier collé*, glued paper, evoking techniques from some decades before, invoking thoughts of his brother, a musician, poet.

Laid beside the candle, eggs in a nest. Though not known where they were laid. Nor known which came first, the candle or the eggs. Not that that matters. Take notice of

the notes, their similarity to DNA, the genetic information of the music. & the eggs, the ongoing vigil waiting for them to hatch, to bring more life in to the world as we hold the

candle up to illuminate their progress. Note the *frisson* between them, candle & eggs, the magic imparted by being together, the dust of dusk accompanying them, adding to the mystery.

The Two Mysteries (2)

There are two pipes. Or,
rather, two paintings of
the same pipe which are
meant both to please others
& ourselves, & to make
others pleased with us.

Do not say there is no heart
in the work here—its basis is
the human heart. The sorcery
lies in an operation rendered
invisible by the simplicity
of its result—to make

the pipe new, but floating in
a natural silence where
attention to the small details
extends it more than
it illustrates it or fills the
void. To make it legend.

Sources:

This Is Not a Pipe, by Michel Foucault

The Ladies' Book of Etiquette (1860), by Florence Hartley

Intimate Journal

& on the sixth day She
remade man in their own
image, after their own
likeness, but with minor

differences. The one to
carry a briefcase, & the
other a clean handker-
chief, so that he could

remove the small chips
of stone that would in-
evitably catch in the eye
when tears didn't come.

High Level Meetings

Certainly the river in the distance confirms that this is up a mountain. & the shadowy figures in the cave are recognizable from their starring roles in many paintings. But the painter who made them famous also caused them to be regarded as typecast; & now, in the years after his passing, their income stream has almost dried up.

Which is where a bit of creative accounting comes in. Get together in some out of the way place. Bring a friend, someone they have previously appeared with but whose bejeweled androgyny still guarantees work in these non-binary times, & who can easily pass as an agent or manager. Then claim inflated expenses when they list this interaction on their tax forms, describing it as a high level meeting.

La Flèche de Zenon

At this point in time
the rock is not falling
or hovering or travel-
ing in a straight line
between two points.

At this point in time
the waves are not
crashing on the shore,
the clouds are still, &
the moon has stopped

orbiting the Earth. At
any point in time, says
Zeno, an arrow is not
moving to where it is
going or where it is not.

No time elapses; so how
can it move? It is already
here, so how can it move
here? At this point in
time I am watching the

movement of a painting
that does not move &
yet it moves this viewer
even though, at this point
in time, the viewer is

motionless.

Les Adieux

Great Gatsbys! A Renoir on
the grass, alas. & too much
incorporated in the painting
to contain it all. Things escape,
many of those the appurtenances
of a dandy — wine glass, rose to
carry in the teeth, some etchings
to come up & look at sometime.

Some things held on to — hat to
keep the sun out, or keep the tan
from overflowing, & gloves to
stroke the mustache with. &
OMG, brogues that exactly
match the color of the frame.

Le Prisonnier

It's probably something I learnt from — copied from? — Magritte, the giving of titles that bear no relation to the item in question, whether it be poem or painting. Here he lines up abstract shapes, inserts a table — not of contents but rather something you'd find in a hallway — & parks them in front of a barely-discernable background that would later be developed across the years into what would come to be described as a typical Magritte landscape, then titles the painting with a name that apparently has no resemblance to what is going on within its confines. Ernst describes it as a collage painted by hand. I'd agree: but also see in it a statement of future intent — never be imprisoned by the fear of change.