

VERSOPOLIS ONE

An amzer o tont / Le temps venant

The coming weather

Lou Raoul

Translated by Ian Monk

Versopolis at Ledbury Poetry Festival

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VERSOPOLIS
is a unique, Europe-wide platform.
It gives emerging European poets
the chance to reach an audience beyond
the boundaries of the language they write in
by translating and publishing their poems
and inviting them to perform at festivals.



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Lou Raoul was born in 1964, in a bilingual French-Breton environment which shaped her perception of life. Her experience of the world, from a very early stage, was influenced by the languages that people customarily speak. Her writing brings Breton close to French and expresses Breton through French. It wavers between narrative and poetic prose and, via the use of characters, delves into the issues of identity and otherness.

Lately, some of her texts have included words from other languages such as English and Croatian.

She has published ten books since 2010, and was awarded the PoésYvelines prize in 2013 for *Else avec elle*.

Lou Raoul gives public readings, takes part in literary encounters and writing residences, hosts writing and speaking workshops, and works in collaboration with other artists – for instance her musical reading *kim m'apprivoise* (*kim tames me*) with musician Kham Meslien – and as a visual artist with her “livre pauvre” collection, *Ko:ra*, which she created in 2012 and where she invites other poets.

Her blog <http://friches-et-appentis.blogspot.com/> is an open window on her own fields and on other worlds as well.

EXCERPTS FROM READING NOTES OR PRESENTATIONS

Lou Raoul's writing is alternately allusive and elliptical; accurate and sharp: it thus enables her to not only cross borders, but also the mirror which reflects the image of her double, who longs for a life of its own.

This writing is borne by a language indebted to the spoken word. Some of the poems unfold and wind as they tell of a given life story. In that respect, they quite recall laments.

Others, more compact, retighten the nuts of the world's great mechanics. In order to grasp every nuance and subtlety, one must stay awake, waiting for whatever will appear or return. And Lou Raoul does.

(Jacques Josse, from a reading note published in July 2012 on remue.net <http://remue.net/spip.php?article5346>)

Lou Raoul has published at Isabelle Sauvage, *Les jours où Else* in 2011, and *Else avec elle* in 2012. . . . Both books are linked by the use of Breton intertwined with French, and by a twofold topic. In *Else avec elle*, the double language tells of death and disappearance.

On the other hand, *Else avec elle* is bonded with the reality of the world and its spatial and temporal depth; it contains its multiple forms: trees,

roads, rains, towns, homeless people, universal healthcare, etc.). *Else avec elle* inhabits this reality. The language, again, reads reality and relates to it. (Christian Vogels, from a reading note published in January 2013 in review N 4728)

Lou Raoul . . . is someone else – *Else* in English – who is that recurring character in her poems.

She is an “else” standing in the middle of a language – of several languages, as she often mixes French and Breton.

Else may be Lou Raoul's double, the one who tells everything, without having her confessing anything; so as not to end in the rut of a self-centered autobiography. It is not unlikely that Lou Raoul herself tells her story in these books – but with a sense of restraint, in a half-fiction mode – resorting to Else. Beneath this work on the other self is Arthur Rimbaud's famous statement: “I is another”. “I is someone Else.” The inner landscape of this offbeat autobiography is not Mediterranean, bathed in sunshine and amber. It is the landscape of Brittany, as melancholic as granite moorlands, as a grey and rainy Breton summer.

This Breton landscape may have cast the perfect solitude in which to listen to the past and the present, passed over through the many voices which can be heard in Lou Raoul's poetry. There is spoken word in her poetry, the spoken word of the dead – and who is it meant to reach out to? There is no answer. Sometimes, with poetry, there is no answer.

Jean-Pascal Dubost, from his introduction to a reading on 2 July 2016 (festival Et Dire et Ouissance / Dixit Poétic)

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Sept poèmes extraits de *Roche Jagu / Roc'h Ugu*

[Éditions Encre Vives 2010]

sur le pilier il est perché c'est cet oiseau
pichig-ruhig rouge-gorge

pichig-ruhig chomit un tamm
rouge-gorge restez un peu
ho tiwaskell skañv war ma c'halon
vos deux ailes légères sur mon cœur
pichig-ruhig chomit amañ
rouge-gorge restez ici
ganeoc'h e teu un amzer all
avec vous vient un autre temps

tous les oiseaux
divers passereaux des grives aussi
quand le soleil est tout à l'ouest
c'est tout le Stanco qui palpète
et sur la terre retournée du courtil
deux tourterelles

et l'une et l'autre



Seven Poems from *Jagu Rock / Roc'h Ugu*

[Éditions Encre Vives, 2010]

on the pillar it's perched it's this bird
pichig-ruhig robin

pichig-ruhig chomit un tamm
robin stay a while
ho tiwaskell skañz war ma c'halon
your two light wings on my heart
pichig-ruhig chomit amañ
robin stay here
ganeoc'h e teu un amzer all
another time comes with you

all birds
various passerines thrushes too
when the sun has reached the west
the whole Stanco throbs
on the turned-up earth of the corral
two doves

both one and the other



dans la cour ce jour-là
seizh eur da noz 'son
sept heures du soir sonnent
et les corneilles dans les labours d'en face

et aussi bien une femme s'approche
oui celle-là même, cette jeune femme brune
se tenant là me regardant
elle est debout près
du muret
du potager
des vaches qui reviennent pour la traite

et autour tout autour autour
les voix envolées de ce jour-là
les voix de tous les autres jours envolés
ma tête tourne ma tête



jusqu'à la fenêtre de la chambre verte
volent viennent vos voix
qui disent ces jardins
et le repos de l'hiver venant

ce crépitement ce n'est pas la pluie
juste le souffle du vent dans le chêne
et s'éparpillent
les feuilles rousses dans l'air humide

pa 'sellan pelloc'h
kant kwech 'sav an deiz war park al lin
quand je regarde plus loin
cent fois le jour se lève sur le champ de lin



in the yard that day
seizh eur da noz 'son
seven pm sounds
and the crows in the ploughed fields opposite

and right then too a woman comes over
yes that one there, this young brunette
just there looking at me
she's standing near
the low wall
of the vegetable garden
the cows coming back to be milked

and around all around around
the voices taking off that day
the voices of all the other days taking off
my head spinning my head



up to the window of the green bedroom
come flying your voices
speaking of these gardens
and the rest that comes with winter

this pattering isn't the rain
just the sougning of the wind in the oak
as reddened leaves
scatter in the damp air

pa 'sellan pelloc'h
kant kwech 'sav an deiz war park al lin
when I look further
the sun rises a hundred times over the flax field



fermés ces jardins et ouverte la terre
entreposés au sec les tubercules
comme les jours s'ef

fil

ochent

les fleurs pourpres dans la lumière
et ce nom d'Anders Dahl
je les porte
sous mes paupières
à présent



ne griffent pas le ciel
les arbres noirs

ils regardent
plus loin dans le jour court
les jardiniers
leurs luisants imperméables verts
leurs sécateurs le long des haies de houx
l'ordre d'ici qu'ils maintiennent

ils regardent
tous les jours vers la cour
les passants
leurs multiples visages
leurs multiples images
qui sont là sur les branches
qui sans heurt aucun glissent
puis s'éloignent tout au long
des racines profondes
du chêne vieux

hag aze emeon me ivez e-touez ar re all
et je suis là moi aussi parmi les autres



closed are these gardens and open the earth
the tubers piled up kept dry
as the days un

rav

el

the purple flowers in the light
and this name Anders Dahl
I bear them
under my eyelids
right now



they don't scratch the sky
these dark trees

they look
further in this short day
the gardeners
their gleaming green raincoats
their secateurs along the hedge of holly
the order here which they maintain

they look
every day towards the yard
the passers-by
their many faces
their many images
which are there on the branches
which quite seamlessly glide
then shift away right along
the deep roots
of the old oak

hag aze emeon me ivez e-touez ar re all
and I am there me too among the others



je suis debout
au creux des lisières herbacées
'vel ma vefe pep d'he flas
comme si tout était à sa place

les arbousiers et les ajoncs et les genêts
poussent bien aussi
l'homme pour les taupes vient ici
deux fois par mois

de l'autre côté du chemin
il faudra dire que ça se déglingue



de ces pages entrouvertes
s'échappent aussi
un souvenir d'enfantin bouquet de fleurs
un regard vers un chevreuil matinal
un souhait paisible d'hommes

tout pezh' zo bet laret din
pezh'meus gwelet ha pezh'm eus ket
pezh'oa, pezh'zo ha pezh'vo
tout ce qu'on m'a dit
ce que j'ai vu et ce que j'ai pas vu
ce qui était, ce qui est et ce qui sera

I am standing
in the depths of leafy borders
'vel ma vefe pep tra d'he flas
as if everything were in its place

the arbutuses and gorse and broom
grow well too
the mole man comes here
twice a month

on the other side of the path
it must be said that things fall apart



from these half-open pages
there also escapes
a memory of a childish bouquet of flowers
staring at a morning roe
a peaceful wish of men

tout pezh' zo bet laret din
pezh'meus gwelet ha pezh'm eus ket
pezh'oa, pezh'zo ha pezh'vo
everything I've been told
everything I've seen and not seen
what was, what is and what will be

Quatre poèmes extraits de l'ensemble *Barbata aux sept douleurs*

[L'ensemble a fait l'objet d'une mise en œuvre plastique sous forme de sept cartes-images rassemblées dans une pochette de papier. Une impression en cinq exemplaires en a été réalisée en 2008.]

Itron Varia Gloazet / Madame Marie Blessée

Salut à vous Dame Marie
Itron Varia salud deoc'h

Sur les routes vous marchez
Regardez-nous de temps en temps

Dame Marie avec votre ange
Itron Varia gant ho ael
A la rivière un pauvre pêcheur
Maintenant et à l'heure de sa mort

Êtes-vous encore la mère de Dieu ?
Baisers d'argent à vous Marie
Pokou arc'hant deoc'h Varia
De vos sept douleurs, ne gardez trace



A-berzh petore sant / En quel honneur

Chans vat 'hetan d'ar bugel mañ
A-berzh Sant Alar hag e geseg
A-berzh Sant Fregan, Sant Tos ha Sant Vio
Gant respet d'an amzer santel
Je souhaite bonne chance à cet enfant
De la part de Sant Alar et ses chevaux
De la part de Sant Fregan, Sant Tos et Sant Vio
Et respect au temps saint



Four poems from the series *Barbata aux sept douleurs*

[This series was plasticized as seven picture-cards (formatted 8.5cm x 13.5cm) presented in a paper pouch. Five copies were printed in 2008.]

Itron Varia Gloazet / Lady Mary Wounded

Hail Lady Mary
Itron Varia salud deoc'h

On the roads you walk
Look at us from time to time

Lady Mary with your angel
Itron Varia gant ho ael
By the stream a poor fisherman
Now and at the hour of his death

Are you still the mother of God?
Silver kisses for you Mary
Pokou arc'hant deoc'h Varia
Keep no trace of your seven sorrows



A-berzh petore sant / To what do we owe the honour

Chans vat 'hetan d'ar bugel mañ
A-berzh Sant Alar hag e geseg
A-berzh Sant Fregan, Sant Tos ha Sant Vio
Gant respet d'an amzer santel
I wish good luck to this child
On behalf of Sant Alar and his horses
On behalf of Sant Fregan, Sant Tos and Sant Vio
And respect at a holy time



Sant Soli / Saint Soli

Sant Soli donnez-leur la main
Fleurs de myosotis au jardin bleu
Dans un coin à mi-ombre
Buvez ceci est de l'eau

Les moutons laineux lèvent la tête
La lune n'est pas visible

Sant Soli il est plus que temps
Ana n'est plus là
De la poussière que ferez-vous
Du pain béni ils vous donneront

Sant Soli, kousket oc'h ?
Sant Soli, dormez-vous?
Ha pad pegeit?
Et pour combien de temps?



Santez Tekla / Saint Thècle

Dans votre dormition
Nous vous saluons
Santez Tekla pleine de charme
Et prenez soin de Barbata

Un torchon dans les mains
Morte dans son sommeil elle est

Du pain d'or lourd donnez-lui
Quand à votre table elle viendra

Sant Soli / Saint Soli

Sant Soli give them your hand
Forget-me-nots in the blue garden
In a corner of half-shadow
Drink this is water

The woolly sheep raise their heads
The moon cannot be seen

Sant Soli it is high time
Ana is no longer there
What will you do with the dust
Of the holy bread you will be given

Sant Soli, kousket oc'h ?
Sant Soli, are you asleep?
Ha pad pegeit?
And for how long?



Santez Tekla / Saint Thecla

In your dormition
We salute you
Santez Tekla full of charm
And take care of Barbata

A cloth in your hands
Dead in her sleep she was

Give her heavy golden bread
When she comes to your table

Extraits de *Else avec elle*

[Éditions Isabelle Sauvage, 2012 Prix PoésYvelines, 2013]

Ma'aï

dans son cœur
au soleil bleu avril
d'abord elle garde
quelques phrases, des mots bout à bout et en marchant elle
en rajoute d'autres, des mots, des phrases
tout bout à bout
c'est dans son cœur
qu'elle réchauffe au soleil bleu avril

et eux ils notent notent notent écrivent à la main ou avec des
claviers
sinon ils oublient tout mis bout à bout
oublent sinon
dans leurs cœurs tout pleins
dans leurs cœurs un encombrement
et toi aussi, Else, comme eux
et pour ordonner tes journées t'écris des listes
ceci cela des listes

puis tu rejoins celle qui se tient sur le banc, assise
c'est pour rejoindre celle qui se tient sur le banc, assise
sur le petit banc de schiste devant sa maison
qui est maisonnette et toit troué
c'est dans son cœur
tranquillement
et peu à peu les années, des phrases des mots ça fait tout ça
cent cinquante longues longues chansons *gwerzio*
dans son cœur par cœur, leurs mélodies aussi
et sans hésiter debout elle, chante
une assemblée autour d'elle beaucoup de monde

tu la regardes chanter dans ton cœur, tu dis son nom et c'est
Ma'aï

Extracts from *Else avec elle*

[Éditions Isabelle Sauvage, 2012 Prix PoésYvelines, 2013]

Ma'aï

in her heart
in the April blue sun
firstly she keeps
a few sentences, words one after the other and while walking she
adds others to them, words, sentences
all one after the other
it's in her heart
that she warms up in the April blue sun

and they note note note down by hand or on their
keyboards
otherwise they forget them all one after the other
or else forget
in their brimming hearts
in their hearts a clutter
and you too, Else, like them
and to order your days you write lists
this and that in lists

then you join her on the bench, sitting
it's so as to join her on the bench, sitting
on the little schist bench in front of the house
which is a maisonnette with holes in the roof
it's in her heart
quietly
and gradually the years, sentences words do all that
a hundred and fifty long long songs *gwerzio*
in her heart by heart, their melodies too
and without hesitation standing she, singing
a series around her many people

you watch her sing in your heart, you say her name and it's
Ma'aï

tu la rejoins dans ton cœur qui va et vient, qui va et vient
tu vois qu'ils passent à 140 leurs véhicules à eux
tu détournes la tête
tu la regardes dans ton cœur, tu dis son nom et elle s'appelle
Ma'ai

un bleu avril pour tous ceux qui l'écotent

*'vit tout re a selaou un ebrel glas
un ebrel glas 'prof Ma'ai
profañ 'ra Ma'ai
ya profet 'vez se ganti*

Ma'ai offre
oui elle offre ça
un bleu avril pour tous ceux qui l'écotent

≈

An amzer o tont / Le temps venant

cette nuit c'est tout près
ce n'est pas le cheval roux qui tracte la caravane, lui qui sait
que tu es là
qui, de plus loin, t'entends, tu vois ses oreilles, entre les branches
ha ne ra nemet glav
et il ne fait que pluie

que celui qui regarde le temps du lendemain dans le ciel se
retourne, s'en retourne
ruz da noz glav pe avel antronoz, rouge à la nuit pluie ou vent
le lendemain
mais celui qui regarde le temps du lendemain dans le ciel est
plus loin, pas avec le cheval roux non plus

que celui qui pose dans l'âtre la bûche très grosse qui ne doit
pas entièrement se consumer se retourne, s'en retourne
celui qui garde le tison

you join her in your heart that comes and goes, that comes and goes
you see that they pass by at 140kph in their vehicles
you look away
you watch her in your heart, you say her name and she's called
Ma'ai

an April blue for everyone listening to her

*'vit tout re a selaou un ebrel glas
un ebrel glas 'prof Ma'ai
profañ 'ra Ma'ai
ya profet 'vez se ganti*

Ma'ai offers
yes she offers this
an April blue for everyone listening to her

≈

An amzer o tont / The coming weather

tonight it's so close
it isn't the russet horse that hauls the caravan, which knows
you are there
which, from afar, can hear you, you can see its ears, between the branches
ha ne ra nemet glav
and it does but rain

may he who is looking at tomorrow's weather in the sky turn
around, return
ruz da noz glav pe avel antronoz, red at night rain or wind
the next day
but he who is looking at tomorrow's weather in the sky is
further off, not with the russet horse either

may he who places in the hearth the very large log which should not
be entirely consumed turn around, return
he who holds the poker

car il réchauffe les âmes des défunts qui reviennent de temps
en temps
qui reviennent sur les lieux de leur vie
kef Nedeleg pe skod Nedeleg, la bûche de Noël, oui,
pas un dessert, non, du tout
de bois la bûche
le tison froid, emballé dans du papier, dans du linge
le tison dans l'armoire, entre les piles de draps, toute une année

debout encore le cheval roux qui t'entends, au delà du talus
que celui qui s'approche peut dire aussi
ar marc'h glas 'zo deuet maes, le cheval bleu est de sortie
en regardant le ciel encore
le ciel qui s'éclaircit, après la pluie

tu ne sais plus, Else
si tu as observé le lendemain de celui qui regarde le temps
le retour des âmes, de telles éclaircies
ce jour tu vois les fils les flots de lumière
aussi les trains rapides qui klaxonnent bien avant d'arriver
à proximité des hommes sur la voie
dans la terre du cimetière, les poussières qui se mêlent
et avec elles, la tienne aussi

mais avant
à la nuit venue, dans la lune pleine tu regardes
pas l'homme à la charrette
tu regardes l'homme devant sa caravane rouge dehors dedans
son bandonéon

for he warms up the souls of the dead who come back from time
to time
who come to the places where they lived
kef Nedeleg pe skod Nedeleg, the Yule log, yes,
not like a Swiss roll of a log, no, not at all
a wooden log
the cold poker, wrapped up in paper, in a cloth
the poker in the cupboard, between piles of sheets, all year

still standing the russet horse which listens to you, beyond the mound
may he who approaches be able to say as well
ar marc'h glas 'zo deuet maes, the blue horse is out
still looking at the sky
the sky which is clearing, after the rain

you no longer know, Else
if you observed the tomorrow of he who watches the weather
returning souls, such sunny periods
this day you see the threads the flows of light
as well as the fast trains honking long before they arrive
near the men on the track
in the earth of the graveyard, the mixing dusts
and with them, yours too

but before
when the night falls, into the full moon you look
not the man with the wagon
you look at the man in front of his red caravan outside inside
his bandoneon

