

Chris Marker (The Impossible Book)

by Maroussia Vossen

(Translated from the French by Andrew Castillo)

“This text is neither a novel, nor an essay, much less a biography. It is the fragmentary account of my link to Chris Marker, from my birth to his death.”

One is a mythical filmmaker, the other his adopted daughter. One made his life a mystery, the other served as its witness. With fidelity and humor, Maroussia Vossen recounts a sometimes-banal relationship, and reveals the portrait of a man who strove until his death to remain an enigma.

Chris Marker is best known as the director of the film *La Jetée*. Maroussia Vossen is a dancer and choreographer.

PREFACE

This text is neither a novel, nor an essay, much less a biography.

It is the fragmentary account of my link to Chris Marker, from my birth to his death.

I will not discuss him as a filmmaker, leaving this task to his commentators. All I can do is recreate a few moments I shared with him, as they return to my memory: more than fifty years of remembrances.

I was scarcely out of childhood when I realized that he compartmentalized his relationships. This allowed him to maintain a particular balance, a singular relationship with the other, to construct a circle of which he was the center, but a moving center. As such, everyone can now speak of “their” Chris.

My point of view (like my life) is comprised of many perspectives. That of a child who seeks a father, of a teenage girl, at once rebellious and awed by this man with the allure of a great, wild beast; finally, that of a woman, set on her own artistic path. The final perspective is likely the most critical. Nevertheless, our relationship was always one of mutual acceptance. You could say that our connection was one of, and beyond words, just as it was outside of normal conventions.

His various aliases were proof of his exceptional gift of adaptability. Chris Marker had a complex character; it has always been difficult for me to define its contours. Paradoxical, contradictory, unpredictable... these are just words. Inevitably, it escaped anyone who tried to trap it in a definition.

DARE

Dare to fix my gaze on a man who “stalked” the world without wanting to be seen.

Dare to tell him things he knew, but did not want to hear.

Dare to talk to him about passing time, people he no longer wanted to see, food.

Dare to look him in his face and say, with a smile: “speak clearly!”

Dare to unmask him, gently, to receive a complicit smile.

Dare to write these words, because at the end of his life he admitted to me that he was completely lost, that, among all his identities, he did not know who he was.

Dare to reveal a little of what, deep down, he would have liked us to know.

THE URN

*“Sooner or later, this body will turn to ash,
For, to nature a tribute must be paid,
And from this, no one can defend himself:
He must die.”*

Étienne Dolet, *Canticles*

After two years of cross-ups and confusion, researchers are still exploring the rubble of his workshop, trying to recover traces of the “Marker spirit,” this as his ashes cool in a basement at Père-Lachaise. I have the honor of fetching and accompanying the man on his last voyage... on the metro to the Montparnasse Cemetery.

I arrive at the reception and hand over the “mission order” authorizing me to retrieve an urn that’s supposed to contain the ashes of Chris Marker.

“There is no urn,” I am informed, “Mr. Marker’s ashes are to be scattered.”

“That’s not what I was told.”

“Then you must choose a model that suits you,” I’m informed by a man who resembles a stray Egyptian cat.

Faced with an array of urns, I opt for one in Cassiopeia blue.

“Ah! You made the right choice, it is a gentle color.”

He slips away via a secret staircase, only to reappear fifteen minutes later.

“Madam, a plaque must be engraved to identify the urn.”

“But sir, I must be at the Montparnasse Cemetery in an hour.”

“I don’t know if I’ll have time,” he retorts; “Ah! I forgot... Do you want a small bag for the ashes to go into the urn?” he continues, not taking my remark into account.

“It is actually useful?”

“No, it is not essential, and it certainly isn’t free!”

“Let’s stop right there, dear sir; the Cassiopeia blue, the plaque, it’s all very good,” I say in a tone intended to be definitive.

He leaves. I feel like a disoriented owl at twilight, flying in open air, amidst a heavy silence punctuated by ringing phones, the comings and goings of staff, stiff and dressed in black, and mourners, also lost, come to attend an improbable funeral ceremony.

A woman comes to sit at the small desk and declares: "I'm taking over at reception."

The Egyptian cat returns with the urn... I offer my Blue Card to settle up.

"We do not accept Blue Card," he announces in a peremptory tone.

"Okay, can I pay in cash?"

"We do not accept cash, only checks."

I am perplexed.

"How?"

"Do you not have a check book on you?"

I begin to lose patience. I phone the commander of my "mission," so she can send an emergency courier with a check...

“I have to go ask my superior for permission“ (which I hear as “Mother Superior.”)

The latter gives her blessing with no further difficulty. I can finally leave with my strange baggage...

I lift the urn to place it inside the sack, and say, without thinking: “it’s heavy!”

The PFG¹ specialist stands, like a mongoose on her hind legs:

“Madam, it is my duty of transparency to tell you that the weight of the urn is determined by the bone density of the deceased... You see,” she says, twirling her hands, “I have thin wrists.”

“Ah! Yes! Me too... and, uh... that's right, he was tough...”

Bag on my shoulder, I hasten to leave. But as I reach the front steps, I waver. No, I tell myself, it can’t be the weight of the urn. I sit at a bench, disconcerted.

Something becomes apparent to me: this weight is more than half a century of familiarity with this man, who, before I was even born, made the decision to care for me. A putative father², in a sense. Laughing, I offer him a few words.

“*Voilà*, now we shall take the metro, that adventurous terrain you loved, but we rarely explored together.”

THE METRO

Wisely seated, Chris on my knees, a kaleidoscope of memories assails me to the rhythm of the stations. The flow of time is abolished. The past parades by like a sequence of flashbacks that fade into one another.

Line 3, Gambetta Station

Our story begins when my biological father left mom when she was pregnant with me. Having learned of this, her friend Bouche-Villeneuve, alias Marker, called her: "I'll come see you, but be polite, tuck your belly under the table." Shortly after, he declared, "I'll take the little one as my daughter."

Line 3, Père-Lachaise Station

I must have been about twenty. Chris phones mother to thank her for having made a daughter like me. A few years later, he would no longer see her, and even refused to speak to her. One day, I dared to ask him why. He fixed me with his steely blue gaze and answered dryly, with finality: "That's my business!" I continued to meet with him. In the end, was it not I who adopted him as a father?

Line 3, Parmentier

My childhood was marked by a song that brought me much laughter, whose chorus was "Zonzonzon and zonzonzon!"

Among the nicknames Chris gave me, his favorite was Zonzon. When I found out that zonzon was slang for prison, I demanded he stopped calling me that. He wanted to hear nothing of it and continued using the word until the end, always in reference to the song, or so I believe. Still, I have always known him to be preoccupied with all things having to do with confinement, in every possible form.

Line 3, République

I think of his short book, *Man and his Liberty*, subtitled *Dramatic Play for a Vigil*, published in 1949. It's a sort of collage of polyphonic texts on the theme of imprisonment. Included is an engraving depicting a circle of prisoners in the interior courtyard of a fortress. An iconic image!

One day, he told me that a man wasn't really a man if he hadn't done three months of jail in his life, a sentence he himself had served. When I was asked him why, he stopped me with a brief and authoritative gesture with his right hand, which said: it's over, let's not talk about it anymore.

Line 3, Arts-et-Métiers Station

I attributed it to his individuality. Later, I met other "revolutionary" activists of all stripes who told me how important it was for them to serve time in jail. I learned it was a kind of fashion at the time. But why three months? No one could tell me. Some saw it as an opportunity to exercise "political action" among the incarcerated population. More likely, the only bogus choice that a political militant of the era had was between doing "hard time," and serving a short stint: insubordination, criminal association, slander against the head of state, etc...

Line 4, Les Halles Station

At two years old, I still wish for a father who would take me in his arms upon arriving home. The hunter of images that he was, as soon he arrived, he would chase me with his camera fixed to his eye. Terrified, I immediately ran to hide “under the table” (a memory from my intrauterine life?), where I waited for him to put away this instrument that separated me from him. He would pursue me for a long time. Curiously, he was ready to jump down the throat of anyone who showed any intention of taking his picture...

Line 4, Saint-Michel Station

As a little girl, I asked mom: “Why does Chris have the name of a felt tip pen?” She replied with a smile: “Come on darling, it’s not his real name, his name is Christian Villeneuve-Bouche.” When I asked him the same question, he told me that *Marker* was pronounceable in all languages, which was his intent. To others, he gave different answers. After his death I discovered, with astonishment, the myriad of pseudonyms he used to sign his works and various collaborations.³

Line 4, Odéon Station

He seems to appear to me out of nowhere, in his adventurer's getup, his Pan Am bag hanging from his shoulder. He dignifies the moment with his presence, at once charming and strange. Before I can enjoy it, he's off to other horizons. I imagine a journalist asking Chris what he thinks of modern geolocation technology. I can almost hear him reply, with a most sarcastic air: How great! It's perfect for being found where I am not.

In fact, as a child, I never knew where he lived; to write to him, it was always: *POST OFFICE BOX 8975027, PARIS CEDEX 01.*

I did not have permission to write down his name or address in my little notebook; all of this had to be kept secret.

Mom tells me it's for political reasons. So I ask, "what does *political* mean?"

"I'll tell you later."

Line 4, Saint-Germain-des-Prés Station

His visits to the house were always too short. Inexorably, he would gesture with his right arm, accompanied by a barely audible "Well, so long girls!"

and I knew I wouldn't see him for a while. Mom had given me one of the handkerchiefs soaked with cologne that he carried at the time, which I smelled to feel closer to him.

Line 4, Saint-Sulpice Station

A glance at the station... I used to stutter, but I was never dyslexic. Still, I read *Saint-Sulpice*, ignoring the spelling. I say to the urn: "We are coming to the end of our journey soon. You would have brought me back to your distant lands. Pity that we've only travelled these modest Stations of the Cross together. Some called you the second coming of Christ⁴; I humbly referred to you as my "soul father."

Line 4, Saint-Placide Station

Or was it never really a question of family? By inventing implausible birthplaces and fabled other-lives, he quickly muddied the trail of his own family origin. One day, I asked him innocently about his father; he retorted in a sharp-edged tone: "What do you mean, I have a father?" Thankfully, on another day, he saw fit to confide to me that he loved his mother very much. I was reassured; he was indeed a terrestrial biological being, like the rest of us...

Line 4, Montparnasse Bienvenue Station

I wonder who will be there to welcome the one who brings back the relics of the great man. Perhaps he saw himself as the hero of *Nobody's Boy*⁵. Far from it! A shrewd genealogist found seven of his relatives to the fifth degree, many branches of a family tree that turned out to be in full bloom. It seems that, until his death, all but one of them was unaware that there was such a celebrity in the family.

Line 4, Raspail Station

Terminus. I haven't been this exhausted since the trip to Tokyo when I danced for you⁶. The last time I left you alive, I called you to tell you I was afraid I wasn't up to the task. You responded in that encouraging tone so special to you: "You've done a lot worse!" On the flight back, I had a very strong feeling that your real family was in Japan: Yuko, your faithful friend; Shimizu and his magic saxophone, who accompanied me in a memorable dance in the pouring rain; Tomoyo, the light of the *La Jetée* bar in the Shinjuku district. And all the regulars at that place out of time.

The Montparnasse Cemetery is just around the corner.

THE FINAL DWELLING

“On the day of resurrection, thou wilt be asked what thy merit is and not who thy father was.”

Saadi, *The Rose Garden*

A small, patient group stands in front of the chapel. Not too late! I know that most are here as a formality. I recognize a few faces that I first came across two years ago; there are also new ones. Some hugs; glances, signs of complicity, a few smiles that take shape, and then freeze.

The actual funeral ceremony was at Père-Lachaise, the day of the cremation. Since then, the ashes have cooled nicely. I approach a man who stands a little apart, a filmmaker friend of many years; as such, he is privileged: he is the only person Chris let photograph him. He tells me first of his profound attachment to his friend, then that he is preparing a film about a Brazilian photographer.

I am suddenly reminded that I have not finished: I still have to place the urn in the nook provided in the small chapel, which has been repurposed as a columbarium. It's very deep, my arm isn't long enough; I ask a cemetery employee for help. The opening is finally sealed. In front of the door, a greeting-cat that is supposed to henceforth ensure eternal peace for Christian Villeneuve-Bouche, so sayeth Chris Marker.

After a short speech, the assembly disperses and heads in small groups to the rue Daguerre, where a friend of Chris's has kindly arranged a picnic.

As I escape with long strides down the alleys of the cemetery, an inner voice suddenly rises in my chest, as if to address an invisible interlocutor: "I'm just like you, Chris!" An annoyed voice, which I immediately recognize, answers me: "It's not your best trait, my daughter." I hasten my step, eager to find an exit and get lost in the noise of the Paris streets.

FOOD

Just having a meal together fell into the realm of the extraordinary!

He always told me that he fantasized about dining on pills, so as not to waste time with what he considered a useless act: eating.

He forget he was talking to a young girl who was in need of appetizing examples...

As a teenager, food became such a problem for me that, concerned for my health, he advised me to go to a nutritionist that he had chosen. Afterwards, he calls me:

“So!”

“Nothing in particular, I need to eat more, particularly bananas, the doctor told me they’re full of potassium.”

“Very well!”

When I visit him the following Sunday, he greets me with a scowl: “I’m tired of eating bananas,” he declares, “they disgust me.”

I laugh, surprised by his response.

“How many have you eaten?”

“Five or six a day, to keep up with you...”

His menu seldom varied: in the morning, two slices of toasted bread with butter one day, honey the next, or the most Spartan cereal the supermarket offered. At noon, a meal replacement purchased at the pharmacy. In the evening, a raw minced steak with a Nordic-sounding white cheese, in memory of his trips to Sweden, and raspberries or a small creamy dessert.

He told me, one day, that he never refused an “herbal tea” from his friend Simone, a sneaky blend of grapefruit juice and whiskey. He liked vodka, but never drank it in front of me.

He was a gourmand...

As time passed, I no longer ventured to bring him sweets. The only treat I found to share with him was tea, coconut or cherry flavored.

He would offer me a selection of his favorite yogurts, and chewing gum; in the past, he chewed it all day long.

Mostly, he gave me delicacies of all kinds that his friends brought him when they visited. I would always leave his place with my cure of stuffed chocolates, almond paste, and all sorts of puff pastries...

RUSSIA

“Why do I love Russians so much?” Chris Marker asks himself in *If I Had Four Camels*.^A

Did he find the answer? I don't know. He often spoke to me about Russians, in a half-playful, half-serious tone. I truly believe that he attributed to Russia a primordial importance to the spiritual evolution of the world. He was sincerely attentive to the Slavic soul. While he never pledged himself to the orthodoxy, he had a real passion for liturgical song and icons. From Moscow, where he often visited, he always brought me small blessed images. Subsequently, a curious series of circumstances saw me baptized in the Orthodox Church. On Easter, I never failed to light a candle for him at the Saint-Serge Church in Paris. He was delighted. One day, he even asked me to light one for his cat Guillaume.

In 1991, I was in Moscow when the putsch took place. When I returned, I was of course summoned to give my report. He listened with a certain feverishness. When I showed him the photos I had taken, he asked me, with some reproach: “I don’t understand! Didn’t you dance atop the tanks?!”

We know of his quasi-devotion to the Russian director Andreï Tarkovski, about whom he made an absolutely luminous portrait⁷. Upon the death of the latter in 1986, I was asked to accompany him to the ceremony at the St. Alexander-Nevsky Cathedral, on rue Daru in Paris. I have rarely seen him so moved.

Out of respect for his soul, which did not cease to inhabit him until the end of his earthly life, I interceded with Father Nicolas Ozoline, a friend who offered a *panikhida* in his name, a special service among Orthodox Christians that marks the first anniversary of the deceased’s entry into the eternal life. It took place on July 29, 2013, at the Saint-Serge Church.

DID YOU SAY STRANGE?

“The intuitions of chance should not be mistaken for coincidences.”

Chris Marker

When I went to visit Chris, it was a face-to-face in every sense of the term. Indeed, I would arrive (always, imperatively, at the exact same time) and sit directly across from him. At that point, I was greeted with a “So then!” This meant that it was time to appease his urgent desire to know what was happening in my life, about my artistic performances in progress, any reflections aroused in me by world events since our last interview.

He listened to me very attentively, acquiescing with a smile or frowning to signal his scepticism or disapproval. After letting me speak, he would allow the silence to linger before firing off a disconcerting remark, something like: “My dear, I’ll never understand why you married the dumbest Russian in Moscow.” He was referring to my ex-husband.

Though they were regular, there was nothing ordinary about these talks. Less regular were chance encounters between him and I. These meetings almost always occurred on bridges – even though we lived on the same side of the river – and just as I was thinking of him. His silhouette would appear, as if from nowhere. When he got close, he'd come to a stop before me and mumble: "See you soon, my daughter!" without the slightest surprise, and then he was off again.

Is this the same phenomenon that occurred, with tragic results, on July 29, 2012, around 4pm?

I was walking on the rue de Reuilly with a friend, to whom I had just pointed out the location of an old editing studio that Chris referred to as *The Penguin*. We were in a hurry because, though it seemed trivial, I had to get home to call him to wish him happy birthday. Just as we crossed the intersection of the rue de Reuilly and Boulevard Diderot, there was a deafening crash behind us. A seller of Middle Eastern pastries came out of his shop and joked (as we were at the height of Ramadan): "Ah! This guy must be starving." A small white car with tinted windows had somehow driven up on the sidewalk, though it was not evident by what maneuver it had gotten there. Although the impact did not seem to be particularly violent, it sat there motionlessly. After an indefinite pause, an icy current ran through me. I was

frozen. Finally, I approached. When I got within two meters or so, I saw the outline of a man, his left hand turning the keys in the ignition while he gestured to me with his right. It was the same gesture that Chris made when he left home with his Pan Am bag on shoulder, having issued his "so long girls!" The car restarted and promptly vanished.

When I got home, I rushed to call him; no one answered. I felt cold. I was upset. I kept thinking about what had happened. Just before midnight, I was notified of his death by phone. He passed away some time around 4pm.

It happened on the day of his birthday. I am sure that he chose it.

THE LITTLE LIGHT

*“Diamonds and pistols,
Both can greatly influence one’s thinking;
However, sweet words
Have even more force, and are worth a higher price.”*

Charles Perrault, *The Fairies*

The day before he died, I did get him on the phone. I had no idea it would be the last time. It sounded to me like he was making a great effort to speak. He wanted to know how my performance at the National Center for Dance, still six months away, was progressing. He had proposed that I dance to the images of his friend Joris Ivens’ film *Regen*, a poetic stroll through Amsterdam in the rain.

Suddenly, his voice grew even more tired, and he told me: “My owl, I’m lost... I don’t know where I am or who I am.” I was distraught. I could only stammer that I loved him and that he was in my thoughts. Just before hanging up, he whispered: “Hang on, my dear.”

The show at the NCD was held on January 31, 2013 (without *Regen*, due to rights issues). I dedicated it to him. Before the show, I deposited my jewelry in their box, including a small diamond necklace he had given me

several years earlier, telling me: “I always want you to have a little light shining on you.”

The show sold out, and was generously received by the public. My performance complete, I retrieved all my jewelry, but couldn't find one piece: his small diamond necklace. I was devastated. But later, it occurred to me that, from his new and distant home, he wanted to show me that I had now found my own light, that I no longer needed his.

PROUD SOLITUDE

“The revelation is that nothing can be revealed.”

Andre Malraux, *Lazarus*

In the early 2010s, I noticed that Chris took the metro more frequently.

I hardly questioned this sudden enthusiasm, especially since he seemed to me to be more and more tired.

Quite recently, our friend Florence Malraux informed me that in was during that period that his cancer developed. He said nothing to anyone. He didn't want it to be known.

For months, he was forced to take the metro almost daily to receive his treatment at the Curie Institute. And just like that, these trips revived his genius for photography! Rather than just take the Paris metro, he charted a new creative terrain. His life force inspired subterranean adventures, of which he was the lone hero.

A few months later *Passengers* appeared, his final photographic work, published in the United States.

Today, I have another look at the book. The faces of the women appear to me like so many stars, dotting the night that he must have been traversing at that moment.

After a few months of remission, the disease returned, even more aggressively. Chris then dismissed all of his friends, even those closest to him, so there would be no witnesses to his decline.

SLEEPLESS^B

“Sleep devours existence, which is a good thing...”

Chateaubriand, *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*, Book 26, Chap. 3

He didn't sleep much. I never saw him dozing, but he was often exhausted. This was caused, on one hand, by the incessant flow of information, relayed by the continuously lit screens that punctuated his workspace; on the other hand, there was his assiduous consultation of newspapers, magazines and email, which he checked daily.

He only found sleep thanks to his “miracle pills,” a chemical hypnosis. One day, he told me: “I could craft a second life from my dreams, each of them more extravagant than the next, but I don't have the time, and waking up is hard.”

After tea, coffee, energy drinks and other Chinese herbs, he was once again ready to work.

TIME

“Time is the substance from which I am made”

Jorge Luis Borges, *Other Inquisitions*

Among the objects scattered throughout his workshop, his favorite were the watches and other precisely synchronized electronic devices that told time, always the exact same time.

In the spirit of collusion, I made a point to arrive right on time whenever I visited him, even if I had to walk around the block a few times when I got there early.

When I rang, a magic owl announced my arrival with a hoot of welcome.

He loved it; he exclaimed: “Wonderful, I don’t know how you manage to be so punctual.” It always made us laugh.

Even his gait was timed, measured, like that of an astronaut walking on the moon. He often wore fur-lined boots like those sold in *L'Homme Moderne*, one of his favorite catalogues. One day he came up with the idea to film his feet while walking on the Parisian asphalt. He somehow managed to give the impression that he was traversing the surface of the moon.

At the end of his life, when he rarely left his workshop, I would ask him if he needed anything. "Time," he inevitably responded.

I called him the "man with the soles of time." ^c

POSTCARDS

Among the books he had entrusted to me, I found a number of jottings, notes and articles, which he had a habit of clipping. Marker was always surrounded by writings, which he kept and consulted.

I don't know very much about his travels. He sent me postcards, often retouched, stamps always carefully chosen, from Moscow, Tokyo, or Sweden. Each of his missives contained an obvious message, and at least two or three hidden messages.

In the pages of his original edition of *Giraudoux by Himself*^D, I found three postcards from Bellac, the homeland of his mentor, inscribed on September 19, 1978 with his famous red felt pen. Strangely, they were all addressed to his own post office box in Paris 12.

Such was the case with another card sent in 1982 from Combray, found in a copy of *Proust, by Himself*^E, which I searched for a clue that might yield yet another lead; I discovered a small wrapping paper from a bakery where he must have enjoyed a local sweet! The address of this establishment, which he taken care to cut out, was 8, rue de Léon-Ferré. He had attempted to erase the “n”, so it read 8, rue de Léo-Ferré, a subject of disagreement between him and I. He knew how much I loved the poet-singer.

“How can you love this guy, he looks like an old ape, I can’t stand him.”^F

TWO OR THREE THINGS I FEEL ABOUT HIM ^G

I very rarely remember my dreams, except for those that involved Chris, simple walks in nature, or in the city. After his death, I had a dream in which he kept me trapped under ice...

Sure, he answered my questions, but usually with a disconcerting brevity, and finality.

From a look, a few words, a wave of the hand, I had to infer everything, this ever since my... less than convenient birth.

Always between two journeys, between two women, between identities, between heaven and earth, between his outer life and inner prison; he loved planes, motorcycles, cars (preferably borrowed).

I don't wish to talk about his cinema, with the exception of *The Last Bolshevik*^H. I think it's my favorite of his films. Everything resounds, resonates in my stomach, the incessant movement of emotions between the images, the dialogue, the music and the silences that always say so much. Almost every time I watch his films, I'm moved to tears. Why? I would love to know! This, since I was a little girl. Is it the validity of his statements? The destinations he finally arrives at? Or his passion that penetrates right to my heart? It's as if he answers the questions that I've asked myself.

I feel how he has marked my existence, influenced my views on the world, on art. When I told him I looked like him, he would reply, annoyed: "It's not your best trait."

His imprint is in my flesh.

Let's talk about flesh! On the subject, he was always more than discreet. He once told me:

"You know everything about my life."

I burst out laughing.

"I know little, if anything. Perhaps a tiny bit more than you've said, but that's it."

I felt that he was essentially incapable of surrendering himself without restraint. I always had the feeling of being both the closest, and the most distant person from him.

VIRTUAL

Marker was fascinated by science fiction. He became a completely different person at the sight of new technology, though he would have preferred that these discoveries were made when he was young.

His unconditional love for gadgets encompassed film, photography and music. However, he never wanted a mobile phone or a microwave oven!

He offered me his first little Mac computer, begging me to use it.

“You know I struggle with technology,” I told him.

“I know, you’re just like Simone. You’re impossible...”

I laughed.

“It’s true, I don’t even know how to drive!”

I knew very well that if I started communicating with him via email, I would see him far less, if at all.

I wanted to preserve our real moments, with his real voice and his looks.

At the end of his life, we were forced to exchange five emails; I knew it would make him very happy.

At first, he responded: “Ah! The first good news in long time, my virtual Owl.”

I do not have an archive of all of the emails from Guillaume-en-Égypte ¹, but I can still hear voice on his last day. I regret nothing.

TELEVISION

“By modernity, I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.”

Charles Baudelaire, *Aesthetic Curiosities*

I arrive at his place; he hands me a receipt and tells me: “Go pick this up at FNAC, under the name of Mrs. Marker,” without telling me what it was.

Fortunately, I went with a friend; it was small television, very heavy, a pre-flat screen model! I got it back home and called to thank him.

“It is nothing my dear, it’s time you knew what was going on in the world. Now, give me a report on this interloper that now resides in your home!”

After using it, I wasn’t sure if I was right to thank him. When I switched it on, I always had the impression that people were inviting themselves into my house.

A few years later, he lead me even further into modernity when he presented me with another television; this time, it had a flat, light screen, and he went to fetch it himself.

MUSIC

“Without music, life would be a mistake.”

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Our preferred middle ground was music. All music, from Bach, Brahms, Rachmaninov, Ravel, Federico Mompou through the contemporary music of Takemitsu, minimalism via Brian Eno, the jazz of Bill Evans and Miles Davis, and let's not forget the unclassifiable Russian singer Vladimir Vysotsky, Barbara or Collette Magny... For each of our meetings, we burned carefully chosen musical selections on CDs, which we exchanged.

The critic and educator Guy Gauthier rightly defined Chris Marker as a multimedia author. I would go even further and say that he was also a multimedia composer. After the piano, he was captivated by the first synthesizers, on which he experimented with every possible combination of sound.

In a footnote for *The Grin Without a Cat*¹, he justifies his choice: “I would not encourage here the (overly) accepted notion that the synthesizer is an *inhuman* instrument. Its resources are endless. But I deliberately used its most aggressive registers to contrast the *symphonic* warmth of Berio’s music, which frames the film. Two musical modes as opposed as the fiery, lyrical illusion and the political ice that can only be reality (with the understanding that one has the right, and sometimes the duty, to deny reality).” In some of his films, his musical creations are attributed to his pseudonym Michel Krasna.

He regretted not having more time to play and compose. I feel nostalgic for those musical moments that he shared with me when I visited him. It was another time...

DANCE

“To dance is to discover and to recreate, especially when it is a dance of love.
It is, in any case, the best mode of acquaintance.”

Léopold Sédar Senghor

I can't talk about Chris without talking about my dancing.

He has always accompanied me on this path.

His first advice was that if I really had something to say, I didn't need any gimmicks, in my décor or my costume, which was reduced to a very simple outfit that he designed for me.

As for décor, he encouraged me to use only the surrounding space, which I always did. My improvisational work was fed by his precepts.

He introduced me to musicians from all walks of life; the Dane Knud Viktor who composed, and produced three shows, using sounds drawn from nature which he

arranged; or Yasuaki Shimizu, the inimitable interpreter of Bach's *Cello Suites* on saxophone. It was alongside him that I improvised in Tokyo in the rain, two months before Chris's death.

When I was a child, he imagined filming me dancing with a cat. It did not happen. Two years before his death, I decided to give it to him as a gift. This is how *Paw de deux*^K was born, a title he proposed for his ten-minute black and white short film. This pas de deux would not have been possible without the cooperation of Laurence Braunberger, Etienne Sandrin, Antoine Miserey and Djaleng from Paleodia, the cat.

He came to see my shows, always the last to arrive and the first to leave with a kiss.

One of the last performances he attended was of two dance pieces, the first an homage to the painter Nicolas de Staël, and the second featuring an original gown by Sonia Delauney. He called me the next day; my dance had moved him. "My owl," he told me, "It was great. I almost danced on the metro platform. You gave me the same feeling as when I saw Jean Babilée dance in *The Young Man and Death*⁸. I was delighted."

LAST LETTER

You always asked me to write you with an open heart. That's what I have done over the years. Without expecting a reply. Each letter was like a message in a bottle at sea, with no way of knowing when or where it would reach you; you often changed addresses. I am writing you this last letter. I no longer know where to send it... Perhaps you will drift through some world of thoughts and discover a way to write me... Then again, we were also in the habit of communicating without words.

The days after your departure left me deeply dismayed. I watched as several people I didn't know suddenly appeared, like mushrooms sprouting after a storm. It did not appear to me that they all had the best intentions.

Some among them told me that you wanted to donate your body to the medical institution. How surprised I was when I learned that you were going to be cremated.

At the scene of the funeral at Père Lachaise, everyone looked the part. Exchanged glances, interrogations, attempts to smile, barely contained tears, moments of unforgettable intensity. We enter the hall, quietly, everyone finds their places while I linger among the columns and sit with a friend who offers me their hand.

The ceremony begins, friends and acquaintances follow one another with a few words, Arielle ^L sings, then musical pieces, bated breaths, and, at some point, Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G*. I release my neighbor's hand, my feet leave my ballet shoes, the music carries me away. I approach your coffin dancing, overwhelmed, in tears.

One day, a farewell party was given in your workshop. In honor of what exactly, I don't know... It was sinister, that somber place full of inanimate objects, computers and other electronic creatures now silent, the hosts taking the vodka from your fridge to make toasts.

I left.

Three years have passed. Your ashes now rest in a small, eight-space columbarium in the Montparnasse cemetery. Is this the last destination you had hoped for? Some of your relatives have recovered documents hidden in your workshop, pieces of your family puzzle that you collected, that you had condemned in your mad youth.

Meanwhile, with the help of a few visitors, your devilish Russo-Japanese avatar was settling into the comforts of immortality on the island of Ouvroir ^{9 M}.

Someday, will you regret not being close to yours... in the family vault?

A “scientific committee” has been established to tend to your archives, to analyze them, classify them, digitize them, can you believe it? It’s no science that I’m familiar with. You’ll know better than me (whom you admonished often enough for my lack of culture when it came to all new forms of visual technology, an area in which you are now considered an apostle).

Your friends from your heroic days are no longer here.
Not even a Michaux to suggest razing the Panthéon and
putting you in its place ^N. That would have made us laugh.

I love you.

Your Owl.

THE LION WHO TRANSFORMED INTO A CAT AND OTHER ANIMALS

When I was little, mom and I lived on rue des Lions (now rue des Lion-Saint Paul) in Paris's fourth district. We had, among other pets, three baby turtles that we raced on a cocoa mat with colored bands. Mom named one of the three "Mimoun."

When I Chris this, he laughed out loud and exclaimed: "Ah! This, I must tell him!"

That's when I learned that Chris and Alain Mimoun¹⁰ were great friends. My story allowed the two of them to share a complicit laugh over the phone.

Chris also started his bestiary as a child, with his cat Riri and his tortoise Tigrette. She would nestle up against the radio when he listened to music.

Christian Bouche-Villeneuve never boasted about being born into a bourgeoisie family from Neuilly. However, he did say he was proud to be born under the sign of Leo. His extravagant bestiary humorously illustrated his dream of founding a republic of animals, of which he would have been king.

According to Jacques A. Bertrand's astrological portrait of the Leo ¹¹: "The Leo has a great passion for democracy, though he does not understand why others still have something to say when he's finished speaking." A fine insight from a dilettante writer with little interest in astrology, no more interest than the *bricoleur* Marker ¹² had in being a filmmaker!

Ultimately, what the lion Chris dreamed of was a republican monarchy, with animals. Atop the Markerian pantheon was the owl, consecrated animal of virginal Athena who reigned with wisdom, reason and chastity.

The only charm he wore was around his neck at all times, a tetradrachm ¹³ bearing the image of Athena with

an owl. One day, he presented me with a smaller version, saying: "She will protect you."

Chris saw in the owl the perfect sentry, with its exceptional hearing and ability to easily observe a wide radius, thanks to its head that can pivot 270 degrees.

But Marker was also a paradoxical lion. He did not like power; neither to suffer it nor to possess it. So he chose his alter ego: the cat, "the only so-called domestic animal that has managed to remain independent, and has never submitted to any power." Its unveiling was announced. In the January 1952 edition of *Esprit*, we find an article signed Chris Marker, relating the visit to a cat salon on rue Berryer in Paris. In it, we find his already imperious declaration: "Cats do not belong to us, it is us who belong to them. Cats are gods, the most common and accessible form of god, and that is beyond discussion." As the Marker the lion fades, the cat Guillaume grows in importance. The Grand Chamberlain quickly becomes the political spokesman, casually revealing secrets of the trade: "I often slip in details that are only noticeable to a few insiders. It was Chris who taught me that. He makes films and everyone thinks he's dealing with serious matters; in fact, they are all personal messages. ¹⁴"

In hindsight, by unravelling his texts and reviewing his films, I can better detect these messages, which he addressed with a variety of different voices (and methods). These are the same ones he sometimes confided to me in private, which I hastened to forget because I found them too sad, too harsh.

It was in those moments that he opened the door to his secret garden, to his most intimate thoughts.

Have we forgotten the silent cry that closes *If I Had Four Camels* (1966)?:

“We are a little far from the garden now.”

“The important thing is not how far it is, but that it exists. And that it exists through our most irrefutable part, our *animal* part. It is not a refuge, it's there, within us, as true as cruelty or the will to live. There is indeed a law of the garden, which is expressed by simple gestures, by the simplest gestures.”

Upon reflection, Chris's bestiary is not a recreational fantasy. Each animal participates in its own animal way, in this garden where a fairer world is conceived.

And to finish with an almost prophetic vision:

“Yes it’s true, when one looks around, there is horror, madness, monsters... But there is already... a resistance, an underground of happiness, a... Sierra Maestra of tenderness... something that advances... through us, in spite of us, thanks to us, when we possess... grace... and that announces, for we do not know when, the survival of the most beloved!”

It is believed that he foresaw the events of 1968^o. The social order will be shaken, but will end up simply changing hands. The cats take to the streets for one final stand.

HEALTH IS OTHER PEOPLE P

“A film has two things in common with an iceberg, namely that, with time, there are fewer and fewer of them, and that the invisible part is larger than the visible part. Save for the rare exceptions, each cinematographic work leaves behind a trail of stumbles, double breaks, regrets, remorse...”

Chris Marker

Chris Marker borrowed a lot. Not like a plagiarist or imposter who appropriates that which belongs to others. No, he always added something to what he borrowed; he also expected the same from his partners. He was, essentially, the first adherent of a collective game. Since 1949, he made it his credo; his first unshakeable conviction was “that one expresses oneself much better using the texts of others, which you have total freedom of choice over, as opposed to one’s own texts, which flee from you as they might flee from God of the Devil.”¹⁵

When he no longer had anyone to play with, he invented someone: he created pseudonyms. Thus, the others came from within him; they were him. And, with practice, he must have realized that he was his own best opponent: the person he was most familiar with.

In *Abroad*, the account of his first trip to Japan, he converses with himself, expressing what he describes as an “instinctive desire to establish a distance” between he who took the photos in Japan, and he who wrote about them a year later in Paris. For a conclusion, he gives us this biting reminder: “One changes, one is never the same, one must constantly become reacquainted with oneself.”

In *Sans Soleil*, he borrows the voice of Samoura Koichi to express a painful, possibly personal sentiment: “Who said that time heals all wounds? It would be better to say that time heals everything except wounds.”

ONE MICHAUX MAY HIDE ANOTHER^R

Although he was always surrounded by woman, Chris often told me that he didn't need anyone. He did, however, admit that there were certain men who had left a profound impression on him. His lifelong model was Henri Michaux. Anyone who met the two of them quickly realized that there was a kind of twinship between them.

In his book *Meeting Henri Michaux*, Jean-Dominique Rey paints a portrait of the poet that could very easily be of Chris: "Michaux was first on alert... He paralyzed the potential enemy. By distance or defense... For a long time, he was the faceless man, the man who eluded the darkroom, who, when he yielded to friends and allowed himself to be photographed, believed that part of himself

was being stolen, and refused to allow the obtained image to be published... beneath his tan raincoat and dark glasses, he sought to preserve his anonymity... after seeing him once, you could recognize him by his walk, by how he advanced... For him, being and appearing amounted to withdrawal... Michaux was the ultimate masked man.”

Even stranger, the two shared the unfortunate tendency to disavow, and even alter, some of their most famous works. In his essay *The Hall of Uselessness*, Simon Leys laments: “It is not surprising, therefore, that in Michaux’s case it was *A Barbarian in Asia* – his masterpiece – that was the most cruelly manhandled by his revisions.”

As for Marker, until his last breath he refused to recognize – and even prohibited the projection of – certain films of his, including *Letter from Siberia*^S and *Cuba, Yes*^S. Likewise, he condemned *The Sure Heart*^S, his only published novel, which seems to have been inspired by the novels of Saint-Exupéry, which he cherished so much.

On two occasions, I was surprised to see Chris Marker lay down his mask and display sincere grief: at the deaths of his mother, and his great friend since

high school, Simone Signoret. I also saw him as intimidated as a child, when I introduced him to Father Nicolas Ozoline, archbishop of the Saint-Serge Orthodox Church, at one of my shows.

SILENCE AND WHISPERS

In an interview, one of the most famous exegetes of the works of Chris Marker spoke of the unsettling presence of the whisper in *La Jetée*. However, the voice whispering in German is not synthesized; indeed, it belongs to a real man, a journalist from across the Rhine... who does not appear in the film's credits. Is this an oversight? No! It was Chris's will, and I know the reason. Maybe one day the identity of the "whisperer" will be revealed.

INANIMATE OBJECTS

Objects were his link to the world. They were an integral part of his life, and his passion was sharing them generously with those around him: cats, tins, pens, key chains when they were in style. Each of his visitors had one or more small gifts awaiting them on a director's chair, or atop a small coffee table.

Mine were always accompanied by an envelope addressed to *Zonzon* or *My Owl*; inside, articles on dance, owls, cats, goldfish... or some CDs.

Objects served as an important intermediary between us. I kept the trinkets that linked me to him, like the orange and black cat that he gave me when I was 8 or 10 years old. He would later have the same attachment to his screens. One day, he told me: "I'm tired of all this,

what I'd like is to set off to Taizé with a small suitcase, to join my friend Brother Roger ¹⁶ and end my days, with my tablet of course." Stored on it, he had the complete *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave* by Chateaubriand and Adolfo Bioy-Casares' *The Invention of Morel*, along with other texts, readings that he strongly recommended to all of his virtual friends, along with his favorite music. During our final meetings, he absolutely insisted that I read Céline. "You'll surely get something out of it, there's a woman dancer and her cat Bébert, you must read *Journey to the End of the Night...*"

A STILL-OPEN WOUND

“One does not know death until he sees it on the face of a loved one.” This quote from Carlo Dossi, taken from *The Ending in A*, cuts straight to my heart, because it seems to me to be the key to Chris’s work. As modest and secretive as he usually was, sometimes, almost in spite of himself, his words would slip out, as if he couldn’t keep them in any longer: “People don’t see it, but I always make the same film, I always tell the same story, in one form or another... even if I change identities, it’s the same trauma that has haunted me, and pursued me everywhere since I was 20 years old.”

THE HANDS OF MEMORY

Following a persistent back pain, my doctor referred me to a physical therapist, informing me that it could be several months because he was highly sought-after. Nevertheless, she arranged for five sessions, and asked him to see me outside of his usual hours, as a favor.

At the second session, he advises me to laugh more often!

“You’re right,” I tell him, “but it’s not so simple; you know, I was raised by 1950’s intellectuals, more used to remaking the world amongst themselves than entertaining a child! My mother was a journalist, and perhaps you have heard of a certain Chris Marker...”

He regards me with a grin, then announces that Chris was one of his patients at the Thalassotherapy^T center in Trouville, between 1975 and 1985.

I cannot contain my emotion.

He recalls that each session would begin with a long silence, then a few words were said, enough to relax him and send them off on an hour of discussion.

With emotion, he describes a man whom he regards as a tormented, visionary poet, whose words, though they were few, were always just.

A CAT'S REGRETS

“Who to lament for? Down here, everyone is a wanderer.
He arrives, passes through just to leave home again.”

Sergei Yesenin, *Poems*

Despite his nine lives, Chris-Guillaume did not leave without regrets. He spoke to me about them repeatedly during our final meetings.

First - following Erik Satie - he described the disappointment of being born too young, in a world that was too old.

Thus, the field of cybernetics, which he would have liked to explore further, opened up too late.

He regretted having met certain people, but regretted even more so that he hadn't met others. This was the case with Helene Grimaud, who he admired as a woman and a pianist, but also as a protectress of wolves^U.

Shortly before his death, he reportedly told relatives that he was worried about me, and that he regretted not doing more to help me.

In my youth, I spared myself no difficulty. I am solely responsible for this. Everything that Chris could do for me, he did. I will always be grateful to him.

THE DRAGON, THE CAT, THE OWL AND THE KANGAROOS

My grandmother was a dragon. Chris detested her! One day when he came to visit, she was over. An encounter between the cat and the dragon was inevitable.

Mister Cat offered to give Madame Dragon's granddaughter a couple of kangaroos, so she could amuse herself in the garden of the country house during the summer months. The little Owl was overjoyed. Madame Dragon was not amused. She left without replying, fuming with anger. Mister Cat was pleased with his prank. The little Owl never did see kangaroos in her grandmother's garden.

CHRIS BLUE

Chris was secretly a dandy. He liked to match his shirts, parkas and sweaters with the blue of his eyes. He always chose a blue-gray that we, my mother and I, called Chris Blue.

ORTHOGRAPHY^v

While he was still a student, the young Marker was, for a short period, Antonin Artaud's secretary. His insistence on correct spelling may have come from this experience. The slightest spelling mistake made him furious.

SEDUCTION

While Marker was known for his almost exclusively female entourage, I have a different perspective on the matter! His ideal was a hybrid being.

He would have liked to have the look of Louis Jovet; the voice and stature of Yves Montand; Gérard Philipe's success with women. As for the prize for male seduction, he gave it to Jorge Semprun, and the award for elegance, to Jean Cocteau. But it was with Alain Resnais that he shared the most essential quality: dignity.

One day, he asked me which men I found the most attractive. I told him "Bourvil, Orson Welles... and you, of course," laughing...

He replied, discouraged: "Really, I will never understand anything about women."

EPILOGUE

“To you, I am nothing more than a fox,
like a thousand other foxes.
But if you tame me,
then we shall need each other.
To me, you will be unique in all the world.
To you, I shall be unique in all the world.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

In Dutch, *Vossen* is the plural of *fox*.

NOTES

1. *Les Pomp funèbres generales* (PFG), the funeral services company that has long monopolized the market in France.

2. The term *putative*, with its unappealing ring, comes from either the (12th century) legal Latin *putativus*, from the supine *putatum*, itself derived from *putare*, “to suppose, count, estimate,” or from the low Latin *Pater Pueri Putativus*, “imaginary father, not real.” In short, my putative father is either providence, or an allusion.

3. In this excerpt from a response letter to an admirer - which he must have forgotten to send, which I found between the pages of one of the books he had entrusted

to me – Chris himself ventures an explanation: “I am like the Chinese of *Journey to the West* who choose new names with each new progression of life, or heteronyms as our dear Passoa called them. And each new identity leaves behind everything that was, for better or for worse, and recognizes neither debts nor merits.”

4. Among the many essays that have been written on Chris Marker’s cult film, there was one whose freshly-printed cover read: *Approaches to a Mythical Film: “La Jetée,” Chris Marker, 1962*. Having been made aware of the typo, the publisher printed another run of the book...

5. *Nobody’s Boy (Sans Famille)*, a novel by Hector Malot, published in 1878.

6. During the *Hors Pistes Tokyo* festival, held at the Centre Georges-Pompidou from June 2-10, 2012.

7. Chris Marker, *One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich (Une journée d’Andrei Arsenevitch)*, 1999.

8. *The Young Man and Death (Le Jeune Homme et la Mort)* is a ballet with a libretto by Jean Cocteau; it premiered on June 25, 1946.

9. Marker is probably referring to the Ouvroir de littérature potentielle (Oulipo), an experimental literary movement founded in 1960 by François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau.

10. Alain Mimoun (1921 – 2013), long distance (5000 and 10000 meters) and marathon runner (and Olympic champion in 1956).

11. Jacques, A. Bertrand, *The Sadness of Libra and other signs (Tristesse de la Balance et autres signes)*, read by me in 1999.

12. This is how he always defined himself, in intimate conversation and speaking as Guillaume. He repeated it again in 2008, during an exchange with two journalists from Inrocks (Les Inrockuptibles):

- What role does SL (Second Life) have in your everyday artistic concerns?

- I don't think I've ever had "artistic concerns." I like bricolage. Here, it's just super-bricolage.

13. Silver coins from the ancient and Hellenistic periods, worth four drachmas and exchanged in most parts. (Varying weights and types, according to monetary system, city and kingdom.)

14. Interview with Guillaume en Égypte in *Poptronics*, October 2009.

15. Chris Marker, *Man and his Liberty: Dramatic Play for a Vigil (L'Homme et sa liberté: Jeu dramatique pour la veillée)*, p. 7, Seuil, 1949.

16. Born in 1915 to a Swiss Protestant family, Brother Roger was the founder of the ecumenical community at Taizé. He was killed in 2005.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For their invaluable assistance, I whole-heartedly thank Florence Malraux, Anne-Marie Jeannou and Silvio Matteucci.

I am also grateful for Michèle Ray-Gavras, Pierre Lagrue, and everyone else, near or far, who went along with me on this caper.

Finally, I would like to offer my warmest thanks to the team at Tripode, a publishing house where Chris surely would have felt at home.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

A. *Si j'avais quatre dromadaires*, 1966.

B. In French, *Sans Sommeil*, a pun that alludes to *Sans Soleil* (*Sunless*), Marker's best-known feature film.

C. In French, *l'homme aux semelles de temps*, a play on *l'homme aux semelles de vent* (*the man with soles of wind*), a nickname given to the poet Arthur Rimbaud by Paul Verlaine because of his propensity for walking everywhere.

D. Chris Marker, *Giraudoux par lui-même*, Seuil, 1952. The writer Jean Giraudoux was an early mentor is Marker's, and the subject of one of his earliest publications.

E. Marcel Proust/ Claude Mauriac, *Proust par lui-même*, Seuil, 1959.

F. Léo Ferré (1916 - 1993) was a French poet, singer and songwriter born in Monaco. One of his famous exploits involving a euthanized pet chimpanzee (which lead to a eponymous song, *Pépée*) may potentially have contributed to Marker's intense dislike of Ferré.

G. In French, *Deux ou Trois choses que je sens de lui*, a reference to Jean-Luc Godard's 1967 film *Deux ou Trois choses que je sais d'elle* (*Two or Three Things I Know About Her*).

H. *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre*, 1992.

I. Guillaume en Égypte was both the name of Marker's beloved orange and black cat, and one of his preferred pseudonyms.

J. *Le Fond de l'air est rouge*, 1977.

K. In French, *Pattes de deux*, a play on *pas de deux* ("step of two" or dance for two), which translates fairly well into English. The film, directed by Etienne Sandrin & Laurence Braunberger and co-directed by Antoine Miserey & Maroussia Vossen, was released in 2010.

L. Arielle Dombasle, the American-born, French actress, singer and Eric Rohmer muse who stars in Marker's *Tokyo Days* (1988).

M. Ouvroir is Chris Marker's island headquarters in the interactive online game *Second Life*. To this day, it remains open to visitors. See author's note #9 for an explanation of the island's name.

N. A reference to the poet Henri Michaux's proclamation that the "Sorbonne should be razed, and Chris Marker put in its place."

O. *Les événements* of May 1968, a period of civil unrest throughout France, during which students and workers took to the streets and demanded sweeping reform. The events ultimately failed to yield any substantial changes, but they did shape the political psyche of the nation for the generations to come.

P. In French, *Le faire c'est les autres*, a modification of Jean-Paul Satre's famous quotation from *No Exit*, "*L'enfer, c'est les autres*" ("Hell is other people").

Q. Chris Marker, *Les Depays*, Herscher, 1982.

R. In French, *Un Michaux peut en cacher un autre*, a subversion of *un train peut en cacher un autre* (one train may hide another), a warning commonly seen on signage in train yards.

S. *Lettre de Sibérie*, 1958

Cuba Si!, 1961 (titled in Spanish)

Chris Marker, *Le cœur net*, Seuil, 1949

T. Thalassotherapy is a form of therapy developed in France that utilizes seawater to cure various ailments.

U. Hélène Grimaud, a French classical pianist, is also known for her advocacy for wolves, and for establishing a Wolf Conservation Center in Upstate New York.

V. In French, *Orthographe*, which can simply be translated as *spelling*, or as *Orthography*, the formal term for a writing system that, fortuitously, echoes *Ornithology*, the term for the study of birds and Charlie Parker jazz standard.