

THE LAST JUDGMENT

(in a slow voice) *

Perhaps it was that judgment day
The white bulls fell to their knees
The horses lined up in profile
The wind preceded the sun
over bridges bent like fields of lavender
Men in acknowledgment had to lift their eyes
to the height of the stained glass The churches encircled
re-became contemporary,

**Translator's note: Michel Deguy's "Le jugement dernier" appears at the end of a review essay, "Jugement du jugement" ("Judgment of judgment"), which appeared in Poésie #155 (Summer 2016), dedicated to Pascal Quignard's book, Critique du jugement (Critique of Judgment). The essay's closing poem is followed by a short coda:*

"Not the newspaper, dear Hegel, but the poem is the daily prayer—with no addressee, no saintliness, "vain" Mallarmé might have said.

As for philosophy, I remember that after all with beating heart (to the rhythm of "the law") and divine beauty above ("the starry sky"), their duo drenched Emmanuel Kant's belief."

*Peut-être était ce jour de jugement
Les taureaux blancs s'agenouillaient
Les chevaux se rangeaient de profil
Le vent précédait le soleil
Par les ponts courbés comme des lavandières
Les homes pour saluer devaient dresser les yeux
à hauteur de vitrail Les églises cernées
redevaient contemporaines,*

"Pascal Quignard btw is highly regarded in French intellectual/literary circles, though not generally well-known to the public, & basically unknown in the States (except perhaps in certain Francophile (or musicological) academic circles... a number of his books have been translated into English). I don't know his writing (I have his book *Critique du jugement*), but what I do know of his (and you may too) is the movie "*Tous les Matins du Monde*," which was a big hit in France, of which he wrote the book & screenplay, & which I remember well & really liked (about a cellist/composer in the court of Louis XIV)... Deguy's essay is long & dense & highly laudatory, even though he disagrees w/ & argues against Quignard's repudiation of "judgment," which at some level is what the poem is about."