

## Singed Arcady

*(After Henry Reed's T.S. Eliot)*

As we get more eclectic we do not get any more rigorous.  
Critics arise in succession from obscurity.  
Last year it was Barthes carrying a load of structures  
Next year it might be Macherey, another Frenchman.  
I, who am not really French, think of universals  
If you can call universal what was once  
Believed by a lot of my friends in London

But does the dilatory barman cleaning glasses  
Do somnambulistic spiders in their frail webs  
Sing of decentred structures? Or is it  
For French intellectuals merely?  
Many barmen, and a lot of spiders, turning the sail  
To windward in their separate fashions  
Do not even speak French  
let alone read it

And there are many things that look totally different  
And flourish in quite separate places.  
French marxist criticism's one of these  
So too is Mongolian peasant culture  
(The tickyong in the midnight Gunza  
Amongst enchanted, though rather puzzled, faces)

If Sartre has a place in heaven  
It's neither in his being nor his nothingness  
This place resides; but rather in his near-divine  
Liaison with Simone de Beauvoir  
Who never even asked him to marry her

Ezra Pound said my great success in England  
Resulted from my impersonation of a corpse.  
This is truer now: I died in 1965.  
Our bodies enter into dissolution, rigour still elusive

As I get more dead I'm glad I'm not alive.  
Macherey is hard to understand and Roland Barthes is worse.  
Krishna said some odd things in his time  
but his books were mostly on the short side

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