

Classic Poetry Series

Pierre Reverdy
- poems -

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Pierre Reverdy(1889-1960)

Pierre Reverdy (13 September 1889 - 17 June 1960) was a French poet associated with surrealism and cubism.

Pierre Reverdy was born in Narbonne and grew up near the Montagne Noire in his father's house. Reverdy came from a family of sculptors. His father taught him to read and write. He studied at Toulouse and Narbonne.

Reverdy arrived in Paris in October 1910. It was there, at the famous Bateau-Lavoir in Montmartre that he met Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Louis Aragon, André Breton, Philippe Soupault and Tristan Tzara.

For sixteen years, Reverdy lived for his writing. His companions were Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse and many others. These were the years in which surrealism took flight and Reverdy partly inspired it. In the first Surrealist Manifesto, André Breton hailed Reverdy as "the greatest poet of the time," and Louis Aragon said that for Breton, Soupault, Éluard and himself, Reverdy was "our immediate elder, the exemplary poet." [1]

In 1917, together with Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire, Reverdy founded the influential journal Nord-Sud ("North-South") which contained many Dadaist and then surrealist contributions. It continued until 1918.

Reclusive by nature, Reverdy began to distance himself from these circles, and in 1926, at the age of 37, he left Paris, converted to Catholicism and went to live in Solesmes, home of the great St. Peter's Abbey. He stayed there until his death in 1960. During this time he wrote several collections including Sources du vent, Ferraille and Le Chant des morts. Besides Reverdy published two volumes containing critical matter (reflections on literature mingled with aphorisms) entitled En vrac and Le livre de mon bord.

For The Moment

Life is simple and gay
The bright sun rings with a quiet sound
The sound of the bells has quieted
down

This morning the light hits it all
The footlights of my head are lit again
And the room I live in is finally bright

Just one beam is enough
Just one burst of laughter
My joy that shakes the house
Restrains those wanting to die
By the notes of its song

I sing off-key
Ah it's funny
My mouth open to every breeze
Spews mad notes everywhere
That emerge I don't know how
To fly toward other ears

Listen I'm not crazy
I laugh at the bottom of the stairs
Before the wide-open door
In the sunlight scattered
On the wall among green vines
And my arms are held out toward you

It's today I love you

Anonymous submission.

Pierre Reverdy