

ABSTRACTIVE
TREATISE
ON OBEUSE

BY PAUL COLINET

*You need to blow hard
to totally nourish
OBEUSE.*



OBEUSE
IN ONLY ONE STITCH
(definitive edition)



OBEUSE AND ONE
OF HIS HORSES
(slowly undoing
the redundant horse)



OBEUSE INSPECTING
ONE OF THE SUMMITS
OF GAURI SANKAR
(difficult descent)



OBEUSE AMUSING
OBEUSE
(children admitted)



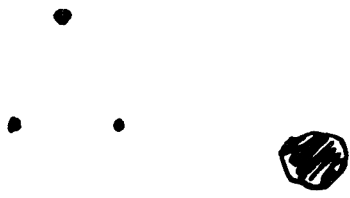
THE REFORMATORIES
OF OBEUSE

(in the middle one :
Alice in Wonderland
eats rubberbands)



HALF MARRIAGE
OF OBEUSE IN
A HAT

(accelerated progress)



OBEUSE SHATTERING
SOME PORCELAIN
LUTES
IN THE CASTLE OF
NIGHT

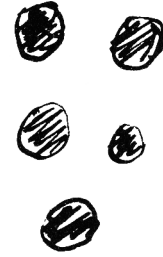
(these lutes belonged to
Marshal Fock)



WEDDING NIGHT
OF THE TRUE OBEUSE
(life size)



UNIVERSITIES SQUASHED
BY TWO OBEUSES
(among nudists)



OBEUSE AT WORK
ON FOOT ON HIS
BATTLEFIELD

(feminist sketch
of OBEUSE himself
whilst bathing)



PILE OF BIKES BELONGING
TO OBEUSE, BECOME A PRIEST.
(exit doors)



CONSECRATED
WALKING STICKS
DISAPPEARING FROM
VIEW OF
MILLIONS OF OBEUSES
THEMSELVES DISAPPEARED.



Afterword

According to the 2002 auction catalog of André Breton's library, where it appeared as item 323, *Traité Abstractif d'Obeuse* was a unique manuscript booklet inscribed: "This object is offered as a sign of friendship to André Breton who has enjoyed my vignettes, Paul Colinet, 1948." Probably though, there was at least one other copy, one used for the reproductions in volume four of Colinet's *Oeuvres*, published in Brussels in 1989 by Lebeer Hossmann, on which this facsimile is based (except for the cover, which is reconfigured from the image in the Breton auction catalog).

Colinet was 50 when he dedicated *Obeuse* to Breton, whom he'd met just a year before. Although Colinet had been active in Belgian Surrealist circles for 15 years or so, he didn't get around much. That is, he was an avid cyclist, but since 1919 he'd had a full time job as an accountant in the communal administration of Uccle, a suburb of Brussels. On the side, he published a little poetry. In the early '30s he met and became friends with the painter René Magritte, for whom, like other Surrealist writers in Brussels, he was soon suggesting picture titles. Through Magritte, he connected with Nougé and Scutenaire. Despite being relatively apolitical and disinclined to participate in factional fights, he began appearing regularly in Surrealist publications and in all the group photos. After

World War II, he helped found a number of experimental literary magazines in Belgium. He published widely, often in collaboration with other writers and visual artists (among whom his nephew Robert Willems figured prominently). He died in 1957.

Obeuse is unusual among Colinet's works, being what we now call an artist's book. Mostly he wrote short prose, lyric poetry, and essays, though he did some other captioned drawings of his own and wrote lots of captions for drawings by colleagues. Much of whatever he wrote was funny, in both senses. "He knew the secret of a humor at once warm and unsettling," Magritte said. One of the few books by Colinet that was published during his lifetime, *Les histoires de la lampe*, short prose and poetry, came out in Antwerp from Ça Ira in 1942. Five pieces from it were translated by Paul Bowles for the "Surrealism in Belgium" issue of Charles Henri Ford's *View*, 1946; many more, along with others from a later collection, *La manivelle du château* (Houyoux, 1954) were translated by Rochelle Ratner as issue 9 of Bob Heman's *Clown War* in 1975; to that selection, I have added some of my own translations to make up *The Lamp's Tales and Other Short Prose*, published by Pleasure Editions in early 2018.

According to another of Colinet's collaborators, Marcel Piqueray, Colinet had an aversion to certain words, for example, "linoleum."

Translated and facsimilized by M. Kasper

Afterword by M. Kasper

Ideas Have No Smell: Three Belgian Surrealist Booklets

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