

Brent Cunningham

The Sad Songs of Hell

The Sad Songs of Hell are rooted in the French poems of Arthur Rimbaud. Since Cunningham knows almost no French, his “translations” use improvisation to create new works, ending up with something between projection, personal indulgence, and some possibly accurate interpretations.

What are these poems ‘after Rimbaud’? What, of his language, sticks around? Perhaps some of his attitude, or political disgust. Maybe we can still hear his famous dialectic between the beautiful and the transgressive. Is it possible that these poems have as much Rimbaudian energy as an accurate translation, or even more? And if they have something to say in their own right, should their relation to the original matter?

// Cunningham exquisitely and skillfully constructs, with logic and anti-logic, hilarious and/or solemn bursts of dramatically charged poems.

— NORMA COLE



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Brent Cunningham is a writer and publisher living in Oakland. His first book of poetry, *Bird & Forest*, was published by Ugly Duckling Presse in 2005; his second, *Journey to the Sun*, was published in early 2012 by Atelos Press. In 2005 he and Neil Alger founded Hooke Press, a chapbook press.