

## Abstracts

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Denise Desautels

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# Abstracts

## **« Écrire comme mourir : tombeau des mots » (Paul Chanel Malenfant)**

The poetry of Denise Desautels highlights the work of mourning: mourning for family figures, objects of beauty, even language itself as a place of melancholy. From one book to the next is created a vast poetic “tomb” sustained by obsessive motifs such as death and words, ruins and tears, rooms and graveyards. Various rhetorical and stylistic markers support this thematic programme. Ritualistic incantation, theatricalization of affects, specular multiplication and verbal expenditure, repetitive textual symmetries, mnemonic reduplication and stories within stories are all techniques of linguistic volubility and pathetic saturation attempting to exorcise the drama of loss, at the level of “forms of expression”, through lyrical flow and utterance. Anchored both in chronology and in the contrapuntal system of echoes reverberating from one book to the next, the polysemic reading suggested here by Paul Chanel Malenfant is one in which the manufacture of the poem is literally governed by the work of mourning.

## **« L'une comme l'autre : compassion et coénonciation dans *Cimetières : la rage muette* » (Pierre Ouellet)**

The “subject” of poetry in the work of Denise Desautels is neither individual nor collective. Though always singular, the subject nonetheless finds expression through several “voices”, in general the voices of other creative people – painters, photographers or sculptors – with whom the speaking *I* seems to find community. This article explores the different ways of “being together” in poetic speech and the type of enunciative ethos that can be found — particularly in *Cimetières : la rage muette* — to underly a type of writing with several voices, one that transcends classic oppositions between identity and alterity or individuality and collectivity to establish the conditions for the emergence of a new subjectivity.

## **« La figure de la répétition dans l'œuvre de Denise Desautels » (François Paré)**

This study explores the figure of repetition as drama and seriality in some of Denise Desautels's works. Initially, the figure relies on the experience of death as a first fracture in time. Recurring in the writer's

memory, the disappearance of the father – a premonition of every other death – compels a shift towards the poem as the universe of what is repeatable.

**« “Ce qui, d’une écriture, n’est pas à lire” » (Linda Bonin)**

Written in the margins of “*Ma joie*”, *crie-t-elle*, by Denise Desautels and Francine Simonin, this study explores the body’s place in writing. Desautels uses the figure of the archaeologist to define her practice as a writer, thus identifying a path through memory’s various layers, a journey in which writing is likely to break through intimacy. This practice leads one to believe that what is involved in the process of digging is actually an auto-bio-graphy of the writing of her being/body in the world. Thus, this work may be seen as an anatomy lesson in which dissection focuses on none other than the written body of a body-of-meaning — a body issuing, among others, from a certain practice of language that leads to a monocular vision, in which differences cancel each other out in a system of oppositions that sets them in a hierarchy.

**« Déplier le temps : mémoire et temporalité dans *La promeneuse et l’oiseau* et *Ce fauve, le Bonheur* de Denise Desautels »  
(Louise Dupré)**

This article analyses the difference in temporal design in two books by Denise Desautels dealing with the narrator’s childhood after her father’s death. The two works are *La promeneuse et l’oiseau*, a long prose poem published in 1980, and *Ce fauve, le Bonheur*, an autobiographical narrative published in 1998. The shift from lyrical to narrative utterance produces a deployment of temporality that affects the process of memory: the cyclical time of *La promeneuse et l’oiseau* is broken, in *Ce fauve, le Bonheur*, by a linear temporality that favours the mourning process. The subject can then break out of previously confining circles of memorial repetition. Poetry and narrative provide for two types of development of memory.

**« La réception critique de *Charles Guérin* de Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. De l’émergence d’une littérature nationale » (Véronique Roy)**

For Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain and his contemporaries, the desire to found a national literature in French Canada is connected with a determination to appreciate literary works according to the ultramontanist ideology conveyed by the ecclesiastical authorities of the period. Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau’s novel *Charles Guérin*, in addition to eliciting widespread interest from literary critics, contributed to the literary effervescence that marked the second half of the 19th century. This article

therefore proposes to analyse *Charles Guérin's* critical reception in the 19th century in order to identify the aesthetic standards prevailing in the evaluation of literary production in the context of an emerging literature.

**« Le relais des survenants chez Germaine Guèvremont »  
(David Décarie)**

The resemblance between the Survenant and l'Acayenne, in Germaine Guèvremont's *Le Survenant* and *Marie-Didace*, opens the way to many other passages. The character is enriched through connections with countless figures from bestiary and landscape, through the contribution of intertextuality, and, more surprisingly, through an encounter with style as the Survenant's names are juxtaposed with words from the same lexical family. The relay of the "survenants" forms the keystone of the diptych, precisely because these characters are inter-related at several other levels of the novels. As the transition of the "survenants" is analysed in the light of these multiple connections, the focus shifts from the characters' identity to the interrelation that is the basis of their existence.

**« L'art de se brûler les doigts. L'imaginaire de la fin de *La petite fille qui aimait trop les allumettes* de Gaétan Soucy » (Bertrand Gervais)**

How can we explain the strange mistake at the heart of Gaétan Soucy's novel, *La petite fille qui aimait trop les allumettes*? A young girl, pregnant and even on the point of giving birth, persists in believing she is a boy. Her refusal to accept her own condition leads her to deny its principle until it shatters. What is the basis of this universe in which everything seems unhinged: identity, behaviour, time, and especially the language, made up of archaic and invented words, of an erratic speech? According to the hypothesis formulated to answer these questions, these disturbances are the signs of an imaginary end: the world represented in the novel is about to experience a form of apocalypse, perhaps intimate and local, but relentless. The chief manifestations of this phenomenon will be described.