

“Nos rêves s’en iront par les chemins”

There are beings in this world who radiate and spread friendship, hope and culture. In their lives and through their work, Suzanne Renaud and Bohuslav Reynek were among them.

Here in Grenoble, where they met each other on the trail of poetry, perennial ties of friendship blossomed all around them, despite hardship, separation and those strange, terrible years in history. Suzanne Renaud and Bohuslav Reynek’s many friends here and in Reynek’s homeland share a precious legacy: the world of harmony. Harmony between ages, between ideas, between intellectuals and simple folk, not to mention harmony with our little brothers and sisters the animals, so present in Reynek’s work. By their simple existence, Suzanne, Bohuslav and their sons Michel and Daniel “cultivated” us, with open hearts, in the garden of their kindness and nobility.

When I think of the cold winter day Suzanne quietly left us, her poem comes to mind:

*La nuit, la pluie, un peu de vent...
Ô ma mémoire la plus vraie
Qu’as tu recueilli dans ton van ?
Si peu de bon grain, tant d’ivraie.*

Then it was Bohuslav’s turn. Envisioning his death, near the end of his life he wrote these words in one of his last letters:

J’attends une joie inattendue – je ne sais d’où et malgré tout.

So...

How can the desire, how can the energy, not be felt to reveal their work, which deserves greater recognition in France. It is work steeped in resilience and the “little hope” dear to Péguy, work born of attentiveness to humble things — a rare resource. That is what led Les Amis de Suzanne Renaud and Bohuslav Reynek, today grouped together in an organisation called the Association Romarin, to collect and publish a complete edition of Suzanne Renaud’s poems and the catalogue raisonné of Bohuslav Reynek’s graphic work, now available online.

Carried out with the close cooperation of the Reynek brothers, the collaboration of many Czech museums housing major collections of Reynek’s art and the devotion of friends — allow me to salute the art historian Nathalie Servonnat — this endeavour enabled us to take the full measure of the fervour the couple arouses in the Czech Republic as well as in countries around the world.

But Grenoble remains the setting of a jewel — renewed Franco-Czech relations, in the image of the young Czechoslovak republic’s outpouring of love for France and the French language during the interwar years, which saw the birth of one of its most beautiful stories: the Don Quixotesque Reynek visiting his Dauphinoise Dulcinea, Suzanne Renaud, and whisking her off forever to the harsh Vysočina in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands.

“Nos rêves s’en iront par les chemins...” (“Along the trails our dreams will go...”)

Well, dear friends, as the exhibition’s title suggests, walk on the trail. Follow the little pebbles that are the signs of their lives and work: delicate prints, poems and letters carefully chosen by Mrs. Bois-Delatte and her staff.

Get to know, or become reacquainted with, Bohuslav Reynek and Suzanne Renaud.
That will make our bonds of friendship even stronger.

Annick Auzimour, Grenoble, 2 April 2015
*(Speech delivered at the opening of the
exhibition Along the trails our dreams will go...,
Bibliothèque d’étude et du patrimoine de Grenoble)*