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REVIEWS & PRESS

Edmond Jabès and Ed Epping. *Desire for a Beginning, Dread of One Single End*. Granary Books,.

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Beam, Jeffery. "Review of *Desire for a Beginning, Dread of One Single End*." *Oyster Boy Review* 17 (Fall 2003).

I have long admired Jabès's work since its introduction to American readers over 20 years ago with *The Book of Questions*. His scrutiny of Self and the Word adds to centuries of mystic work determined to unravel and re-knot the labyrinthine hidden meanings within the Jewish holy books and their symbolic representation of the Chosen, humanity. Among the last of his works translated into English, *Desire for a Beginning* consists of a series of aphorisms aimed at stirring memory as "shad roils its world of water," at the "wound" that "creates man," at "having the book as witness" and thereby "having the entire universe vouch for us." Illuminated by digital images by Ed Epping, this tiny book, true to its genre, encourages contemplation, bewilderment and revelation. Jabès reminds us that "the void is more daring than the whole" and "we die only one death: the one we did not expect." He assures us that the void is a comforting part of us (or rather we of it) and that to open oneself to it is to find eternity: "Young, the world, in the eyes of eternity, and so old in the eyes of the instant."

Original URL:

<http://www.oysterboyreview.com/archived/17/recommended/BeamJ-Jabes.html>

Staff. "Cere-ious Collaborations." *Publishers Weekly* (May 14, 2001).

After publishing the magnificent, limited edition *The Traveler and the Hill, and the Hill* in 1998, Granary Books is issuing the latest collaboration between poet Lyn Hejinian (who recently was awarded the \$35,000 Merrill Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets) and artist Emilie Clark. A "real-time" collaboration undertaken during a stay on Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, the book "is guesswork, abduction// Wherever there is/ trivia there is/ vicissitude and issue/ of emotion." Beautifully printed on thick cardstock, each of these 24 serial watercolor-collage-text pieces is backed by a graded, monochromatic study suggesting the myriad "layers" of the ecosystem into which they had inserted themselves: "If there can be separation/ Sporadically/ A site of shared detonation." (Granary [D.A.P., dist], May 1)

Taking a more archaic approach are poet Susan Howe (*My Emily Dickinson*, etc.) and artist and critic Susan Bee (*The M/E/A/N/I/N/G Book*)—"Pensive itinerants and exhorters/ gathering manna in the morning"—in their forebodingly titled *Bed Hangings*. The book juxtaposes fragmentary texts culled from

a variety of early American sources, with Bee's clipped caricatures, altered engravings and slyly reconfigured silhouettes iconically pointing the way back to "ten thousandth truth/ ...as if tumbling were apt/ parable preached in/ hedge-sparrow gospel." (Granary, 14.95 paper 48p ISBN 1-887123-51-2; May 1)

Also from Granary, a New York art book publisher headed by Steve Clay, come two related poems by Edmond Jabès, *Desire for a Beginning and Dread of One Single End*, presented with digital art work by Ed Epping, director of the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois, Chicago, in this small, glossy-paged book. Translated from the French by poet and Burning Deck books publisher Rosmarie Waldrop, Jabès's aphoristic sentences and fragments take us from seeing that "A block of ice is nothing but a limited quantity of water surprised by cold" to the realization that "At death's door, it is not the future of the soul that worries us, but how the body behaves." (Granary [D.A.P., dist], May 1).

Original URL:

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA82165.html?text=desire+for+a+beginning+and+dread>