



Commencing  
by Trevor Huxham

Today I had a conversation in  
The language of the Franks. Don't bother me  
About it being question and response;  
A message was communicated, and  
It was received. What's more important is:  
This was my first attempt at speaking French,  
The tongue not only of my ancestors,  
Those Québécois, but also daughter of  
The way-the-Romans-speak, or, Romance. I  
Had studied Latin since a little boy,  
And spoke long after its Hispanic child.  
So French came easy, reading it at least.  
*A French for Dummies*, "French phonology"  
On Wikipedia, and phrasebooks helped  
This English-Spanish speaker wet his feet  
In Lourdes, or set his feet on the first step  
Of Eiffel's Tower, or—begin to move  
Beyond cliché and into *vérité*:

And so today in my first class for French  
When my professor questioned me in French  
And I replied, San Fran—she's in the west!  
Sweet pigment from the *Tricolore* dripped down  
And fell upon a black-and-white rosebud,  
Which time-lapse style unfurled its crimson flags.  
The silent S in "Arkansas" awoke  
To ask me now to join the Francophone.  
An organ blasted some Camille Saint-Saëns  
As all the *départements* from metropole  
To Réunion basked in the sun and said,  
"*Bienvenue.*"