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Man and His Shadow Jean Tardieu

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Jean Tardieu

MAN AND HIS SHADOW

The defeat of idols has not stifled in us the desire to construct some huge creature, alien to reason, capable of containing all of our anxieties and, at the same time, conduct us to the doors of an incorruptible empire, adorned with the august prestige of impersonality.

Yet, by a bizarre paradox, since nothing, even that which lies on the edge of emptiness, can tear us away from the memory of our condition, it would seem that the first of these mythic figures, still obscure and quivering, like a newborn world, is man himself.

In the definitions that he gives to his own nature, to his destiny, there is not a trait, not a notion that does not surpass him. His gigantic shadow drags him along and he follows it, moaning.

From *La part de l'ombre*

Translated from the French by James Vladimir Gill