



The Magnetic Fields

André Breton, Philippe Soupault, David Gascoyne (Translator)

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Les Champs magnétiques (1920; The Magnetic Fields) is known as the first major surrealist work.

The Magnetic Fields Details

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Scotty says

Better than poetry

Ricardo says

Necesito saber más de la corriente estética.

Vit Babenco says

If the eyes are the mirror of the soul then the language is the mirror of the mind... It's enough to make a mirror a little bit concave or convex and then the reflections will be full of new wondrous meanings and colours.

The corridors of the big hotels are empty and the cigar smoke is hiding. A man comes down the stairway and notices that it's raining; the windows are white. We sense the presence of a dog lying near him. All possible obstacles are present. There is a pink cup; an order is given and without haste the servants respond. The great curtains of the sky draw open. A buzzing protests this hasty departure. Who can run so softly? The names lose their faces. The street becomes a deserted track.

About four o'clock that same day a very tall man was crossing the bridge that joins the separate islands. The bells, or perhaps it was the trees, struck the hour. He thought he heard the voices of his friends speaking: "The office of lazy trips is to the right," they called to him, "and on Saturday the painter will write to you." The neighbors of solitude leaned forward and through the night was heard the whistling of streetlamps.

This way the journey commences... Or probably continues... Or maybe we're just going nowhere and all the world is locked inside our heads.

The nocturnes of dead musicians lull the cities sunk in endless slumber. On the outdoor flight of steps of a hotel on Thirtieth Avenue a baby gambols with a puppy. No, you can form no idea of aquatic mores simply by looking through tears, that's just not true. Space soft as a woman's hand belongs to speed. Gradually one draws nearer to scrub-lands and markets. The depth of the Market-halls is less than that of the Pacific Ocean. The thick much-thumbed books become abandoned shells full of earth.

Surreality is impossible to prove but is unavoidable...

Mel says

Andre Breton's The Magnetic Fields, written in 1919, is a wonderful piece of writing; like a painting for the imagination made out of words, instead of lines and shapes. It is surreal; but it is not word salad, more like word magic. Wonderful images cascade upon wonderful images that I want to hold in my brain and try not to forget. Some of it is written in the form of poetry and some is prose. All of it is beautiful in its own way. I loved this and want it to be part of my permanent collection but it appears to be out of print, and used copies are a bit pricey. I was glad to be able to get a copy from the library. I will probably savor this one a little longer and I am sure I will check it out again at some point.

Some small examples of the writing style:

“ I have a sinister mark on the inner side of my arm, a blue M which threatens me. ”

“ Street-singers, the world is wide and you will never succeed.”

“I swear to you that I am innocent. You mistake the burning tip of my cigarette for the pupil of my eye.”

I could quote the whole book. It has so many delightful turns of phrase. Highly recommended to those who enjoy this type of writing. 5 stars and best reads pile.

Nate says

It will make you the prisoner of a drop of water.

Tuck says

just wanted to post the album review for the BAND magnetic fields new album "love at the bottom of the sea"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/reviews/h3b6>

John says

"The most magnificent doors are those behind which the words: 'Open in the name of the Law' are spoken."
p. 67

George says

This book is draw-dropping in terms of its step into the modern exploration of the unconscious. In this day of collaborative poems, we should all go back to one of the early key collaborations.

K. says

Stiff stem of Suzanne uselessness above all village of flavours with a lobster church.

Lily says

What do they mean? Who cares it beautiful and strange and carries you somewhere. These read like dreams. Not streams of consciousness but pools of unconsciousness. The sun is arrested and it pukes. Here are a few of my favorites:

There are wizards so destitute that they use their cauldrons to boil the clouds and that's not the end of the matter....

There were delightful displays of childish temper about those succulent plants that can never be applied to corns, they're were fleur de lys preserved in brandy when you fell over.....

We touch those tender stars which filled our dreams with our fingers....

All of us laugh all of us sing but nobody feels his heart beat any longer....

Our prison is built of well loved books but we can no longer escape because of all the passionate odors that send us to sleep.....

True stars of our eyes how long do you take to revolve around our heads?

The window carved in our flesh opens onto our heart.....

Colin Clay says

I felt so magnetized that I couldn't distinguish south nor north. This is IMAGINARIUM. Just let it spin your mind.

emm says

Crazy. Sexy. Cool. Tres francais. Absurd on an obscure level. I look forward to re-reading this for many years to come to escape and to inspire me in my own work.

Sacha says

One of my all time favourite books. It keeps going. Attracting.

Andy says

Get ready to have your mind blown by the leader of the surrealists. Good luck!
