

“The Program in Several Centuries” by Armand Robin
Translated from the French by Alfred Nicol



Today, we're delighted to feature a new translation of the well-known poem by Armand Robin "Le programme en quelques siècles," translated by the award-winning poet and translator Alfred Nicol. In Nicol's own words, this exquisite poem is "by far the most well-known of his poems—for good reason, as it makes a profound sociopolitical statement, as relevant to the present as it was to the poet's own time."

And remember, in September and beyond: read, share, and spread the word about your favorite works in translation. Now more than ever, it's important to make your voice heard.

—*Claudia Serea and Loren Kleinman*

Armand Robin

The Program in Several Centuries
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We will do away with Faith
In the name of Light.
Then we will do away with the light.

We will do away with the Soul
In the name of Reason.
Then we will do away with reason.

We will do away with Charity
In the name of Justice.
Then we will do away with justice.

We will do away with Love
In the name of Fraternity.
Then we will do away with fraternity.

We will do away with the Spirit of Truth
In the name of the Critical Mind.
Then we will do away with the critical mind.

We will do away with The Sense of The Word
In the name of the Meaning of words.
Then we will do away with the meaning of words.

We will do away with the Sublime
In the name of Art.
Then we will do away with art.

We will do away with Scripture
In the name of Commentary.
Then we will do away with commentary.

We will do away with the Saint
In the name of the Genius.
Then we will do away with the genius.

We will do away with the Prophet
In the name of the Poet.
Then we will do away with the poet.

We will do away with Spirit
In the name of Matter.
Then we will do away with matter.

IN THE NAME OF NOTHING WE WILL DO AWAY WITH MAN.
WE WILL DO AWAY WITH THE NAME OF MAN;
THERE WILL NO LONGER BE A NAME.
THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW.

Armand Robin

Le Programme En Quelques Siècles

On supprimera la Foi
Au nom de la Lumière
Puis on supprimera la lumière.

On supprimera l'Âme
Au nom de la Raison,
Puis on supprimera la raison.

On supprimera la Charité
Au nom de la Justice,
Puis on supprimera la justice.

On supprimera l'Amour
Au nom de la Fraternité,
Puis on supprimera la fraternité.

On supprimera l'Esprit de Vérité
Au nom de l'Esprit critique,
Puis on supprimera l'esprit critique.

On supprimera le Sens du Mot
Au nom du Sens des mots,
Puis on supprimera le sens des mots.

On supprimera le Sublime
Au nom de l'Art,
Puis on supprimera l'art.

On supprimera les Écrits,
Au nom des Commentaires,
Puis on supprimera les commentaires.

On supprimera le Saint
Au nom du Génie,
Puis on supprimera le génie.

On supprimera le Prophète
Au nom du Poète,
Puis on supprimera le poète.

On supprimera l'Ésprit
Au nom de la Matière,

Puis on supprimera la matière.

AU NOM DU RIEN ON SUPPRIMERA L'HOMME.
ON SUPPRIMERA LE NOM DE L'HOMME;
IL N'Y AURA PLUS DE NOM.
NOUS Y SOMMES.

About the author:



Armand Robin (1912-1961) The eighth child in a family of peasants, Robin had the good fortune as an undergraduate to be taught by Jean Guéhenno, whose secret journal, published in English as *Diary of the Dark Years, 1940-1944*, chronicled the infringement of traditional French rights and values by the Vichy government. Robin visited the USSR in 1934, where he was shocked by the reality of communism. He joined the French Anarchist Federation in 1945.

Mastering over twenty languages, he made a living broadcasting foreign news. He translated the Hungarian poet Endre Ady, the Russians Blok, Yessenin, Mayakovsky and Pasternak, as well as Omar Kayyam, Edgar Allan Poe, and Chinese, Arabic, and Swedish authors. His work in poetry includes *Ma vie sans moi, 1940*, *Les poèmes indésirables, 1945*; *Le monde d'une voix, 1968*, and *Fragments, 1992*. He also published one novel, *Le temps qu'il fait, 1943*, and a pamphlet concerned with totalitarian propaganda, *La fausse parole, 1953*.

About the translator:



Alfred Nicol's new collection of poetry, *Animal Psalms*, was published in June, 2016 by Able Muse Press. Nicol has published two other collections, *Elegy for Everyone* (2009), and *Winter Light*, which received the 2004 Richard Wilbur Award. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The New England Review*, *Dark Horse*, *First Things*, *Atlanta Review*, *Commonweal*, *The Formalist*, *The Hopkins Review*, and other literary journals. More information at alfrednicol.com.