

Jacques Brault and E.D. Blodgett, Au cœur du bois,
Les Éditions Lucie Lambert, Vancouver, 2005.

Lucie Lambert's latest achievement is the publication of Au cœur du bois, a collection of eleven short poems by Jacques Brault and eleven poems by E.D. Blodgett, inspired by eleven woodcuts by the artist. The prints show quivering bouquets of boughs and branches that lead the eye into tall forests or into copses, undergrowth, tangles of varying degrees of complexity and ramification, with flame-like and wave-like textures. Through this abstract *foliage*, like liquid hair, shimmers a "flower sun" that seems to illuminate these enchanted forests from within. These images invite us to go straight into *the heart of the wood*, into the very substance of the material carved by the artist. Our journey is intensified by the evocative power of the poems inspired by the prints, poems that paint a landscape of trees and forests, but also of birth and life, in the depth of the shade, before an *earlier* world that has now disappeared. Each of the poets in turn brings us into the breath of the wind in the pastures, into the heart of the night, the heart of the rain, bidding us to traverse uncertain regions between time and space. The epigraphs of Chrétien de Troyes and Dante have already shown us the path that stretches out before our eyes: "Night and the forest bring to him / Great pain, but more pain / Than night and forest brings the rain." And Dante: "So far had my slow steps now brought / Me into that ancient wood that I could not / Discern the entrance to it that I sought." It is this twofold *plan* that is opened out through the series of prints and the words of the two poets, animated by the same breath, moving to a similar rhythm.

Published in an edition of forty copies, this eleventh artist's book by Lucie Lambert is printed on Japanese obonai paper. The poems were set by hand in 18-point Nicolas Cochin type and printed by Martin Dufour. In the deluxe copies, the box is made of leather and adorned with a piece of exotic wood; in the other copies, it is made of Japanese fabric. Both were designed and constructed by Pierre Ouvrard, and the deluxe copies are secured with a metal tool forged by the engraver. As precious as the works that came before it, Au cœur du bois is the result of meticulous collaboration, and even more importantly, it is the fruit of a passion that is intimately shared by all who worked on it. As with most of her earlier books, the primary inspiration remains a strong sense of closeness to nature (bestiaries, fruit, water, air, clouds, wood...), taking shape before our eyes in printed and written images born out of the same creative impulse.

Jean-Pierre Duquette