

Tzara at that time wrote the *Vingt-Cinq Poèmes*, which belong to the best in French poetry. Later we were joined by Dr. Serner, adventurer, writer of detective stories, ballroom dancer, physician specializing in skin diseases, and gentleman burglar.

I met Tzara and Serner at the Odéon and at the Café de la Terrasse in Zurich, where we wrote a cycle of poems: *Hyperbole of the crocodile-barber and the walking cane*. This type of poem was later baptized "Automatic Poetry" by the Surrealists. Automatic poetry issues straight from the entrails of the poet or from any other organ that has stored up reserves. Neither the Postillion de Longjumeau nor the Alexandrine, nor grammar, nor aesthetics, nor Buddha, nor the Sixth Commandment can interfere with it in the least. It crows, curses, sighs, stammers, yodels, just as it pleases. Its poems are like nature: they stink, laugh, rhyme, like nature. It esteems foolishness, or at least what men call foolishness, as highly as sublime rhetoric, for in nature a broken twig is equal to the stars in beauty and importance, and it is men who decree what is beautiful and what is ugly.

Dada objects are formed of elements found or manufactured, simple or heterocline. The Chinese several thousand years ago, Duchamp, Picabia in the United States, Schwitters and myself during the war of 1914, were the first to invent and disseminate these games of wisdom and clairvoyance which were to cure human beings of the raging madness of genius and return them modestly to their rightful place in nature. The natural beauty of these objects is inherent in them as in a bunch of flowers gathered by children. Several thousand years ago, an emperor of China sent his artists out to the most distant lands to search for stones of rare and fantastic forms which he collected and placed on a pedestal beside his vases and his gods. It is obvious that this game will not appeal to our modern thinkers of the go-getter school, who lie in wait for the art-lover like hotel porters waiting at the station for guests.

Are you still singing that diabolical song about the mill at Hirza-Pirza, shaking your gypsy curls with wild laughter, my dear Janco? I haven't forgotten the masks you used to make for our Dada demonstrations. They were terrifying, most of them daubed with bloody red. Out of cardboard, paper, horsehair, wire and cloth, you made your languorous foetuses, your Lesbian sardines, your ecstatic mice. In 1917 Janco did some abstract works which have grown in importance ever since. He was a passionate man with faith in the evolution of art.

Auguste Giacometti was already a success in 1916, yet he had a liking for the Dadaists and often took part in their demonstrations. He looked like a prosperous bear and, doubtless out of sympathy for the bears of his country,