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All sorts of rubbish . . .
Jacques Réda

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All sorts of rubbish is floating about in the canal underneath the move-
able bridge, its machinery thick with grease and with hardly a cog on
the wheels. The shape of a bottle can still be easily recognized, but the
flabby dead forms brought alive by the plopping water turn the blood
cold. And here is where you see it, less than a hundred metres past the
rue de Crimée and its ancient barbarity, the living embodiment of the
new barbarity. There it is, opposite warehouses with whole bushes pro-
jected from their brick-pillared corners, thrusting itself up in a single
narrow block over more than thirty floors, white in the blue sky which is
raging like a furious angel. Why would it not assume this appearance
of a block of flats? So it does. Clouds go scurrying over its head in
terror. And knowing nothing of angels or blocks of flats perhaps they
divulge its name. Then something else happens on the same path they
are following, across the Canal de l'Ourcq: a sort of slow-motion erup-
tion of a mountain of smoke, as blue as a segment of the Juras, and
we—a passing postman and myself—stare at each other in amazement
at the exuberance of the world.

Translated from the French
by **Mark Treharne**