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All sorts of rubbish . . .

Jacques Réda

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Jacques Réda

All sorts of rubbish is floating about in the canal underneath the moveable 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 projected 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 eruption 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**