Max Jacob

From *Le cornet à dés*

THE SOLDIER OF MARATHON

There's a feast in the asylum for the insane: at night, the paths of the property are invaded by an amiable, slightly frightened crowd. There are, here and there, little wooden tables with candles protected by glass, and where candies are sold: everything went well, except that during the theatrical presentation given by the inmates, one of them who played the rôle of a Sir or some Lord, would throw himself to the ground in a notable pose and would scream: "It is I who is the Soldier of Marathon." Auxiliary staff had to bring him back to reason, in the present, in the presence, in the precedence, but they didn't dare to make use of their truncheons because of the present, of the presence, of the precedence.

Translated from the French by James Vladimir Gill