



The Conductor and Other Tales

Jean Ferry

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First published in French in 1950 in a limited edition of 100 copies, then republished in 1953 (and enthusiastically praised by André Breton), *The Conductor and Other Tales* is Jean Ferry's only published book of fiction. It is a collection of short prose narratives that offer a blend of pataphysical humor and surreal nightmare: secret societies so secret that one cannot know if one is a member or not, music-hall acts that walk a tightrope from humor to horror, childhood memories of a man never born, and correspondence from countries that are more states of mind than geographical locales. Lying somewhere between Kafka's parables and the prose poems of Henri Michaux, Ferry's tales read like pages from the journal of a stranger in a familiar land. Though extracts have appeared regularly in Surrealist anthologies over the decades, *The Conductor* has never been fully translated into English until now. This edition includes four stories not included in the original French edition and is illustrated throughout with collages by Claude Ballaré.

Jean Ferry (1906-1974) made his living as a screenwriter for such filmmakers as Luis Buñuel and Louis Malle, cowriting such classics as Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le Quai des orfèvres* and script-doctoring Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du paradis*. He was the first serious scholar and exegete of the work of Raymond Roussel (on whom he published three books) and a member of the Collège de 'Pataphysique.

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