

9 — SAINT GILDAS DE RHUYS

Marie Le Franc loved open spaces, especially the magnificent coastline between Saint-Gildas de Rhuis and the inlet to the Gulf of Morbihan, an area she refers to a great deal in her work.

Let's hear how she evokes this seaboard in a flight of great poetry, covering visual and historical landmarks and giving depth and mystery to this end of the peninsula:

“She had chosen the main road which ran high and straight across the peninsula. On one side, they could see a dark blue band of ocean along the cold indentation of the coast, on the other the lighter waters of the Gulf of Morbihan, bordered by hamlets, the houses leaning into one another and whispering under their hats. The tower of Saint-Gildas' church, built on a rocky promontory, stood out like a ship's funnel in a sea of mist, and the village was invisible. (...)

On the right, towards the coast, rose a sort of giant tumulus which they called the Petit Mont. (...) On the other side of the road they saw a similar one, but higher: Le Grand Mont. Eve, who was perusing the countryside, turned suddenly to her companion. (...) He stood with his arms crossed, his face turned towards the sea. His eyes were half-closed, but he was nonetheless surveying the vast arc of open water. (...)

Grand-Louis, no doubt, also felt a blind joie de vivre on that June morning, at the top of the world, and he advanced among the dark forces, vibrating like a mighty mast in the sea breeze.”

These pages on Grand-Louis l'Innocent are echoed in a short story, *Obsession*, in which the marine panorama brings people together, as she says: “These holidays at Saint-Gildas, this running into Suzanne on a windy day, on the high cliff. She had sea legs, sea hair; the sea breeze made dimples in her cheeks then erased them. They had finished the walk together, on the narrow path overlooking the foaming shore. They walked at the same pace, their thick-soled wartime shoes biting into the rock, the wind tossing back strands of their hair like it tossed back the raging waves. The intoxication of the universe mingled with that of their youth. Three months later they were married.”

See also *En souvenir de la côte de St-Gildas*, LES MOMENTS
Moments of happiness, lively and furtive,
Appear occasionally on the rock at times
when like lizards, in a heartbeat, they touch:
You feel the bright, golden eyes gazing at you.

We were overwhelmed with space and light;
A gesture, it seems, would have propelled you
Into the green open chasm beside you,
And now a shiver makes the rock vibrate.

But we lay our brows on the rock for hours
With more abandonment and less bitterly
Since we grew certain that the tender moments,
Like a secret, ardent life, would remain.