

Arthur RIMBAUD

Introduction : who is Rimbaud ?

The most fascinating French writer

A poet : who does, who makes, who creates :

- a new language ?
- a new vision of the world around him ?
- a new manner to compose poems ?

The « fire thief » : Prometheus

Rimbaud's face has been well known throughout the last century (« Rimbaud is beautiful ! »). (Refer to the attached document)

He has :

- a wilful look in his eyes : he is a sighted person
- the physical appearance of an eternal teenager : he is a passer-by
- rebel hair : he is a bohemian eager to experiment freedom

These days :

- an event ! a new picture of the older Rimbaud
- an exhibition in Paris, that is Worth a visit !

A short biography

He was born in 1854 in Charleville-Mézières (in the eastern part of France, near Metz), a town which he hated...

He was an excellent student, interested in literature.

His teachers and cult figures (Banville, Hugo, Gautier, Leconte de l'Isle, le Parnasse) gave him some literary ambition.

He wanted to « find another language », to invent something.

In the historical context of the Franco-Prussian war (1870), he ran away and came to Paris, then travelled to Belgium and the United Kingdom. He found love (and had a passionate love story with Paul Verlaine). Then in 1875, he travelled to Aden (Arabia) then Harar (Abyssinia).

At the age of 20, he chose to change life and went to Africa. He completely stopped writing.

He died in 1891 at the age of 37, further to a knee cancer.

Rimbaud's poetry

Rimbaud was thirsting for the absolute : « Le poète se fait voyant » (« The poet becomes a sighted person »)

He was not interested in old-fashioned poetry : « La poésie doit être en avant. » (« Poetry must be avant garde ».)

He made some experiments with his own language : he combines new sounds, like in « Voyelles ».

« Voyelles »

(refer to attached document)

- To be read in class
- Translation of the first line
- a language that mix mystery, alchemy
- all the senses are in use : taste, smell, eyesight, hearing.
- multiple interpretations.
- the last four lines bring us back to >Rimbaud's eternal face.