

## Paravane

FRANCES PRESLEY was born in Derbyshire, and grew up in Lincolnshire and Somerset. She lives in a housing cooperative in north London, and the local fashion trade was the subject of her collaboration with the artist Irma Irsara, *Automatic cross stitch* (Other Press, 2000). She has also collaborated with the poet Elizabeth James in an email text and performance (*Neither the One nor the Other*, Form Books, 1999). She has written about her poetic practice and that of other British women poets, and is on the editorial board of *How2*. Her most recent sequence, *Paravane*, began with *How2* communications post 9/11. This book brings together much of her new and published work since *Linocut* (Oasis, 1997).

“Frances Presley’s writing engages with serious political concerns underscored with deeply personal experience. The world ‘out there’ of unrest, injustice and conflict is not something to be compartmentalised but co-exists with the domestic on equal terms. A summer flower or childhood memory in Somerset blossoms next to the exploding horrors of 9/11. She is not a poet to shy away from life but pushes language into its face until it yelps.” —GERALDINE MONK

Previous publications:

*The Sex of Art* North and South, 1988

*Hula Hoop* Other Press, 1993

*Porous*, an art book by Irma Irsara, with words by Frances  
Presley, 1995

*Linocut* Oasis, 1997

*Neither the One nor the Other* a collaboration with the poet  
Elizabeth James, Form Books, 1999 (CD version also  
available)

*Automatic Cross Stitch* – part of a collaboration with the artist  
Irma Irsara, Other Press, 2000

*Somerset Letters* Oasis, 2002

# Paravane

NEW AND SELECTED POEMS 1996–2003

FRANCES PRESLEY



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*for Gavin*



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## Acknowledgments

*Private writings*, Maquette, 1998

*Neither the one nor the other*, a collaboration with the poet Elizabeth James, Form Books, 1999 (CD version also available)

*Automatic cross stitch* – part of a collaboration with the artist Irma Irsara, Other Press, 2000

*Somerset letters*, Oasis, 2002

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Poems from 'Paravane' and 'Uncollect' have appeared in the following journals: *Osiris* (Andrea Moorhead), *Electronic Poetry Review* (Katherine Swaggart), *Shearsman* (Tony Frazer), *Oasis* (Ian Robinson), *Salzburg Review* (Wolfgang Gortschacher), *The Paper* (David Kennedy).

And in the anthology *In the company of poets*, edited by John Rety. Hearing Eye, 2003.

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I'm grateful to Peterjon and Ian for allowing me to reproduce some of their images, and to Irma for collaborating again to produce the cover image 'Orizzonte'.

Finally I want to thank my partner Gavin Selerie who collaborates with me in and out of text.



## Paravane

Barbara, the patron saint of architects, was looking out from the tower in which her father had imprisoned her for refusing to marry the man of his choice, who was not a Christian, when she noticed that the tower was structurally unsound and might collapse at any moment, so she decided to stop worrying about her marriage and her religion and focus on how the design might have been improved, but as she could only see a very small part at the top of the tower she had to extrapolate

downwards



## Paravane day

*for Mary Herivel*

gather into the chariot bearing  
sing low sweet  
parabola in time high emptied windows

way to go  
way to go home

or does this show  
our 'general direction of travel'?  
(new set of overheads)

here he is at the gate  
with his ultimate ticket  
*leave mooder, mooder leet me in*

never leaving a message  
on her answer phone tape

pause b\_\_\_\_\_

overgown gathers dust  
testing gradual perfect sight

notation spot lights flash across and over  
coming to light under your fingers

a slight undulation  
at the western most edge  
one in ten  
seeing light in rain waves

coral cantor in a minor key  
*love, mum*

## Ground O

Prone veering  
Bell sign  
Enters Fuji  
Bell sing

Grasp maws  
Programmed claws  
Dance over pyr ric

Features focused  
Eye tongues  
Prest glass  
Dance over lights

Less than thin  
Steps away  
Test bed  
Of  
Filed  
Filings

Be a part of it  
I want to

Blow your horn  
Fit the battle of

Sally sally sally's army  
Find us now and at the hour

Skies over  
Heavens over  
Fuji

Arterial tree  
Gird her soft toys

Calm/  
Ing piano  
Issime



between high walls a narrow space  
of boards, clay and sca (f) folding  
yellow on her red shoes  
washed away across the pavement  
falling over bollards and pipes

*Bowyers*

commissioned  
by the Worshipful Company of Longbows  
to a window  
in memoriam

in memo  
insert crest  
insert Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt  
famous  
vic  
tories

she felt the ideas could  
be taken further  
in contemporary glass  
the bow treated in an abstract

manner yew leaves and the long curve  
grows and moves  
bows lend themselves  
to rescue  
yew leaves and the long curve

the

long

curve

yew

leaves

yew

cutline

9/2

*prose of the Jubilee*

lines from her forehead  
press down to the bridge of her nose

INTRODUCE SOMEONE TO OUR WORLD

It's harder to enter Number One  
through its transparent stiles

“the absence of colour emphasises structure  
and geometry”  
Contemporary Applied  
Arts

I dreamt that our rich host was kindly showing me round his  
art gallery, and then I saw you slumped in a corner, blood on  
your face. You were fortunate – he was paying for your  
rehabilitation

praying for your rehabilitation

“WE CALL IT SHOUTING”  
he explained  
this use of underlining  
or capitals

the danger of walking or cycling  
past scaffolds in squalls  
or standing with security  
under a red citigroup umbrella

blown back  
follow anyone  
under the glass

Capital Wharf  
no memorials  
no libraries  
no books

this free paper:

the bean counters  
long summer  
banks pet  
banks put

STOP

to exile of Thatcher  
island of lost soles

FORGET THE REST

CLICK ON TO THE BEST

leaving soles on the sally ledges  
peer above the spikes

AN UNDERTAKING

Which, under the favour of GOD, shall contribute  
STABILITY, INCREASE and ORNAMENT  
smudged line of cement

bisects the stone slabs