

"Jean Métellus's strikingly original voice is finally available in a splendid translation that captures the epic sweep and tragic thrust of his hallucinatory style. Haun Saussy renders with subtle poetic nuances the poet's engagement with Haiti's mythic gods, its landscapes and natural disasters, and the heartbreaking fate of its children. It will now be possible to teach Métellus in world literature courses, alongside Homer, Aimé Césaire, René Depestre, or Derek Walcott, and appreciate anew his remarkable talent and singular vision."

—**Françoise Lionnet**, author of *Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity*

"This collection of poems, originally published forty years ago, is already a classic in the French and francophone literary world. This brilliant English translation could not come any sooner. With a unique blend of cadence and precision, Haun Saussy extricates the essence of Métellus's powerful and poetic voice one would have thought was only translatable in Haitian Kreyòl."

—**Daniel Desormeaux**, University of Chicago

"Saussy's translation remarkably preserves Métellus's poetic imagination and the Haitian matrix in which his entire literary work is inscribed. It skillfully transfers into English the coalescence of the poet's native land with the universal, the deliberate language turbulence, the 'thought-rhythm-images' association, the words' effervescence, and the sparkling images of Métellus's poetic language."

—**Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi**, Stanford University

When the Pipirite Sings gathers poems by the noted Haitian poet, novelist, and neurologist Jean Métellus, who died in January 2014. Along with other signature works, this volume includes the first English translation of Métellus's visionary epic poem, "Au pipirite chantant" ("When the Pipirite Sings"), widely regarded as his masterpiece.

Translated by formidable comparative literature scholar Haun Saussy, *When the Pipirite Sings* expresses an acute historical consciousness and engages recurrent Haitian themes—the wrenching impact of colonialism and underdevelopment, the purposes of education, and the merging of spiritual and temporal power. And, as always with Métellus's poetry, the range of voices and points of view evokes other genres, including fiction and cinema. This eminently readable book has formal and thematic ties to Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, central to the canon of French-language postcolonial writings.

JEAN MÉTELLUS (1937–2014) was the author of several novels, books of poetry, and plays, all written in French and largely untranslated. In 1959, to escape the Duvalier dictatorship, Métellus moved from his native Haiti to Paris, where he studied linguistics and medicine, specializing in neurology. The magazine *Les lettres nouvelles* published his poem "Au pipirite chantant" in 1973, beginning his career as a poet and writer.

HAUN SAUSSY is a professor at the University of Chicago, where he teaches in the departments of comparative literature, East Asian languages and literatures, and social thought.

Cover art: François Cauvin, *The Day I Saw Red I Got Free* (mixed media on canvas), 2006

Cover design: Marianne Jankowski

Poetry

U.S. \$18.95

ISBN 978-0-8101-3978-7



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9 780810 139787

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