

MICHAEL HOFMANN

Notes Without a Text (Dalkey Archive) by Eugenio Montale's Triestene friend and contemporary Roberto ("Bobi") Bazlen (1902-65), in an elegant translation by Alex Andriessse, is literature in its pure, raw, most recessive form: the unpublished torso of a novel, *pensées* from notebooks, and something I never thought I'd see: scads of publishers' readers' reports. (But what publishers - Einaudi, Adelphi! - and what reports - on Musil, on Hamsun!) If such a book can be published, "now", or "still", then one thinks there must be some hope for the Archimedean virtues it exemplifies: the first - or last - cuckoo in the coalmine.