CARL SKOGGARD

Carl Skoggard was trained as a musicologist and for many years served as an editor for the music bibliography Repertoire International de la Littérature Musicale (RILM), New York, where he was responsible for German materials. More recently he was also the staff writer for Nest: A Quarterly of Interiors, an award-winning magazine created by his partner Joseph Holtzman.

Over the last decade Skoggard has prepared translations with extensive commentary for the three major autobiographically-oriented writings of the German-Jewish philosopher and cultural theorist Walter Benjamin. His bilingual edition of Benjamin’s Sonnets has made this little-known but important body of poetry available to readers of English for the first time.

Skoggard’s latest project, just completed, is a translation of Siegfried Kracauer’s Weimar novel Georg. This is a brilliantly cinematic, darkly comic evocation of that troubled era. Skoggard lives in Valatie, New York, with Holtzman and assorted animals.

Walter Benjamin’s sonnets, written to mourn his friend Fritz Heinle, constitute an important though little-known part of the philosopher's literary achievement and a unique contribution to the history of the German sonnet. Benjamin would add to their number over a decade, having begun his project soon after the outbreak of World War I and the suicide of his friend. They were among the writings that Benjamin, forced to flee France, entrusted to Georges Bataille in 1940 for safekeeping.

Here, for the first time, readers of English are offered translations of all 73 “Heinle sonnets” along with the original German text and an extensive commentary.