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| Ponge, Francis (1899-1988) |
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| One of the most critically-acclaimed and beloved French poets of the twentieth century, Francis Ponge wrote prose poems that explore the intricate forms of ordinary and overlooked things. Born in Montpellier in 1899, Ponge associated briefly with the surrealists but never joined the movement, preferring the freedom to experiment on his own terms. In his best-known work, *The Nature of Things* (*Le parti pris des choses*),he contemplates the material and conceptual existence of slight, seemingly sub-poetic objects, from pebbles and cigarettes to oysters and snails. Eschewing the title of poet, Ponge termed his lyrical compositions ‘description-definitions’. His style privileges the fragmentary and incomplete; books such as *Mute Objects of Expression* and *Soap* are composed as series of unfinished drafts and variants. Combining philosophical reflection with linguistic playfulness, Ponge’s work bears witness to the pleasures of writing and to the dignity and worth of the everyday world. |
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| **Further Reading:**  (Derrida) |