Anne Reverseau

**Jules Laforgue (1860-1887)**

Jules Laforgue is one of the French “poètes maudits” of the late 19th century. Maintaining a certain distance from literary movements, he developed a unique style, mixing the expression of pain with humor and sometimes satire. Often compared to Tristan Corbière, he is considered a Symbolist for his mysticism and the use of free verse, especially in his *Derniers vers* (*Last Verses*, 1890). He is also a precursor of the group called *Les* *Fantaisistes* for the oral character of his poetry. Jules Laforgue takes part in international Modernism thanks to his interest in urban transformations and because of his impact on Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. His poetry, influenced by Walt Whitman (whom he translated) and by Verlaine, is known for its spleen, with *Les Complaintes* (*Complaints,* 1885). The short stories of *Les Moralités légendaires* (*Legendary* Moralities, 1887) rewrite legends such as those of Salomé or Hamlet. Born in Montevideo in a Breton family, he was quickly recognized in French literary circles and published in Symbolist reviews such as *La Vogue*. He was especially close to Paul Bourget, Gustave Kahn, Félix Fénéon and Jean Moréas. Thanks to them, he obtained a position as private reader for the Empress Augusta in Berlin. Afflicted with **consumption**, he returned to Paris where he died at the age of 27**, thus perfecting his image as melancholic poet.**

References and further reading

- Laforgue, J. (1970), *Poésies complètes*, Pia, P. (ed), Paris: Gallimard. (only a few poems are translated in English, in reviews).

[Dale, P. (1986)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Dale_%28poet%29" \o "Peter Dale (poet)) *Poems of Jules Laforgue*, Vancouver: Anvil Press.

Paratextual material

- *Oeuvres complètes de Jules Laforgue* (1903), Paris: Société du Mercure de France (online): http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k80142t.r=jules+laforgue.langFR

- portrait of Jules Laforgue by L. Corneau (public domain) : <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7722475v.r=jules+laforgue.langFR>

- portrait of Jules Laforgue by unknown painter (public domain): http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Laforgue\_portrait\_painting.jpg

- <http://www.laforgue.org> (in French)