

DAVID PRATT

ANDRÉ FRÉNAUD

Last night at Shakespeare & Company,
a woman with a belt like a boxer's
read poems about torpedo juice
and psychotic vegetables;
she held her papers too near a candle,
and came close to destroying
a historic landmark
and a score of professional expatriates.

But here, in the Bibliothèque Nationale
is André Frénaud,
in the last months of his life;
André Frénaud, who wrote,
Haineusement mon amour, la poésie
and,
Où est mon pays? C'est dans la poème

An affable, elderly man,
he sits in the audience,
and listens to a panel discussing his work.
And when a latecomer asks,
why are we not hearing André Frénaud?
he stands and turns and blinks
through his glasses
and says

I'm no good at speaking in public,
but I am full of poems.