

## The Stadium Organ

by André Obey



*“There are nine of them down on the greensward—a grassy bank along the flowing river of the track—as in a meadow by the water’s edge. On the opposite bank, the precipitous crowd on the rising tiers of the Marathon stand resembles the slope of a hill. Twenty races, proudly bearing their national emblems, are seated in solemn state as if for some last judgement.*

*Martin sits on the grass beneath the infinite gaze of the Concourse of Nations. The sounds of the stadium do not reach him. He is lost in his own thoughts—concentrating on putting on his spiked shoes properly, on doing up his laces without getting them twisted, on tightening with a safety pin the elastic of his running shorts. His one*

*thought is to banish all thought. He holds himself closed to the world, shut up within himself, under the spell of an inner music that is the voice of his organic certainty—that is the prelude, growing more powerful second by second, to the race he is about to run. Dark thoughts rain down on him, but slide off without leaving their mark, like water off a duck’s back.”*

(Extracts from the poem: “Paul Martin’s 800 m”.)