Book camera obscura: *Théâtre de l’univers*

“All the world’s a stage / And all the men and women merely players,” philosophized the melancholic Jacques in William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Over a century later his metaphor was charmingly reframed and made concrete by a portable camera obscura built into a folio binding stamped *Théâtre de l’univers* (Theater of the Universe) on the spine.

When this “book” is opened on a sunny day and the concealed optical device properly set up, miniature reflections of the proximate world and its inhabitants move silently across the stage of the book’s inside back cover. Within the curtained space of the camera obscura, figures enter and exit, playing for the observer the fleeting scenes of life.