

Frederic Tuten,  
Plain Wrapper Press &  
*Uncle Umberto's Orchard*

MASS MoCA

Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art

Saturday, September 14, 2024

<https://massmoca.org/event/frederic-tuten/>

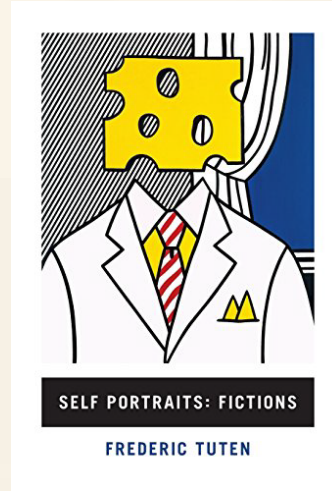
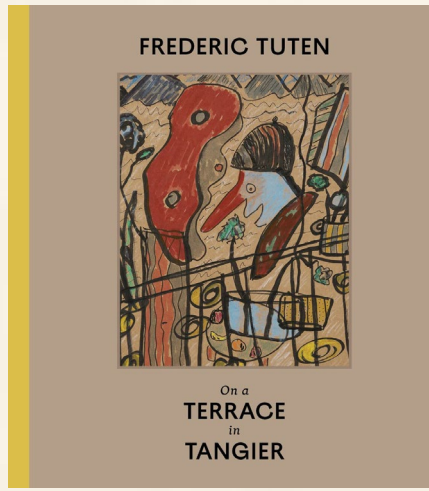
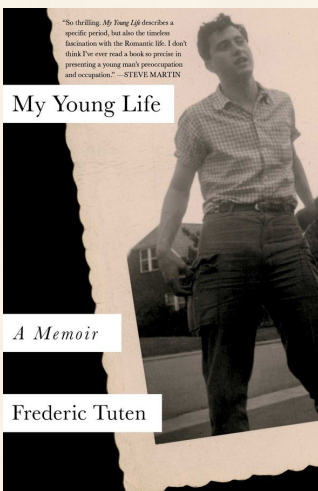
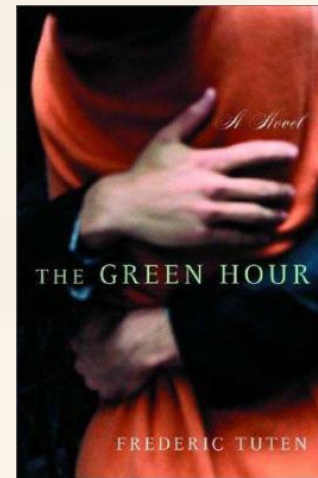
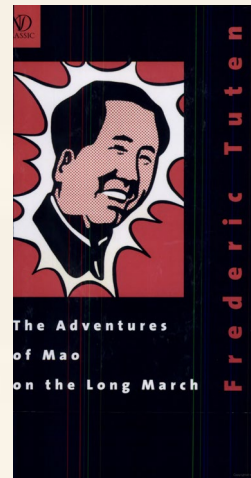
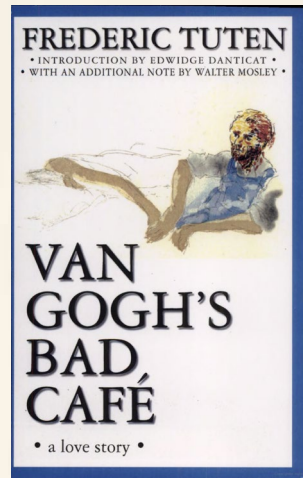
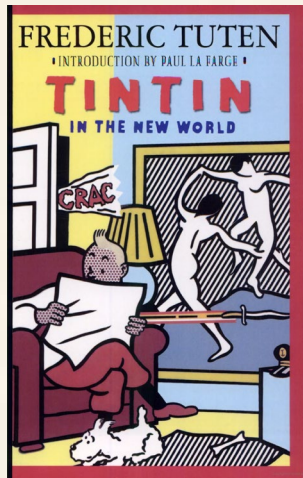
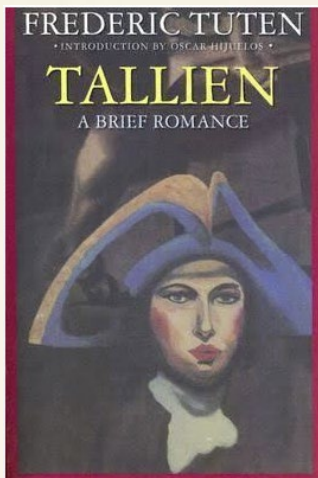
# Tuten: *Author & Artist*

- ❖ Bronx childhood...painting in Paris...Art Students League...NYU Ph.D. in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century American literature.
- ❖ Five novels: *The Adventures of Mao on the Long March*, *Tallien: A Brief Romance*, *Tintin in the New World*, *Van Gogh's Bad Café*, and *The Green Hour*. Three books of short stories: *Self Portraits: Fictions*, *The Bar at Twilight*, and *On a Terrace in Tangier*. Memoir: *My Young Life*.
- ❖ Short stories, and art/film criticism in *ArtForum*, *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Conjunctions*, *Granta* and *Harpers*.
- ❖ Essays and fiction for artists' catalogues of Ross Bleckner, John Baldessari, Eric Fischl, Pierre Huyghe, Jeff Koons, David Salle and Roy Lichtenstein.
- ❖ Translated into nine languages.
- ❖ *Exhibitions*: Planthouse Gallery in New York (2019), Harper's East Hampton (2021, 2022, 2024), Los Angeles (2021, 2023), and New York (2022) and Central Fine Gallery in Miami (2024). [www.frederictutenart.com](http://www.frederictutenart.com)

# Tuten: *Praise*

- ❖ *“It is a joy looking at Tuten’s new paintings.”* — TJ Clark, Harvard University
- ❖ *“Frederic Tuten’s visual world, with its recurring motifs and riotous juxtapositions, is both instantly comprehended but surreally inexplicable. These paintings make you feel that you have just awoken from a fantastic and beautiful dream.”* — Hans Ulrich Obrist, Serpentine Galleries (London)
- ❖ *“Frederic Tuten’s paintings are entirely Tuten-esque, by which I mean joyful. I don’t know how, in these crazy and difficult times, he manages to summon so much inner festiveness.”* — Deborah Solomon, *The New York Times*
- ❖ *“Frederic Tuten overflows with visionary scenes right out of a fecund and ungovernable imagination. Done in an awkward, assured, cartoonish hand with undertones of Arshile Gorky’s teeming amorphic graphic fields, this is pigment, shape and scene as abstract language.”* — Jerry Saltz, *New York Magazine*
- ❖ *“Not thinking about anything except the sheer pleasure of making the work, Tuten forges wondrous paths that . . . inspire us to be just as spirited and creative and capricious as the artist.”* — Ida Panicelli, *ARTFORUM*

# Tuten: Books



# Tuten: Awards

❖ Guggenheim Fellowship for Fiction



❖ Award for Distinguished Writing from the American Academy of Arts and Letters

❖ Four Pushcart Prizes



THE  
Pushcart Prize

❖ O. Henry Prize

**The O. Henry Prize**



# *Uncle Umberto's Orchard*

- ❖ Short story by Frederic Tuten, with two multi-color screenprints developed by Gary Lichtenstein based on original paintings by Tuten
- ❖ Papeterie Saint-Armand custom handmade paper from Montreal, Canada, printed dry on a 219 Vandercook Press in black and burgundy at Sandy Tilcock's lone goose press in Bisbee, AZ
- ❖ Screenprints produced by Gary Lichtenstein at Lichtenstein Editions in North Adams, MA
- ❖ Lettering by calligrapher Jerry Kelly
- ❖ Handbound in linen over boards, with a slipcase, by Jace Graf at Cloverleaf Studio in Austin, TX
- ❖ Publisher Emeritus Gabriel Rummonds designed the book and oversaw the project
- ❖ 80 copies, signed by the author/artist, of which 20 special-edition copies with a third screenprint laid in and enclosed in a clamshell box

<https://plainwrapperpress.com/uncle-umbertos-orchard/>





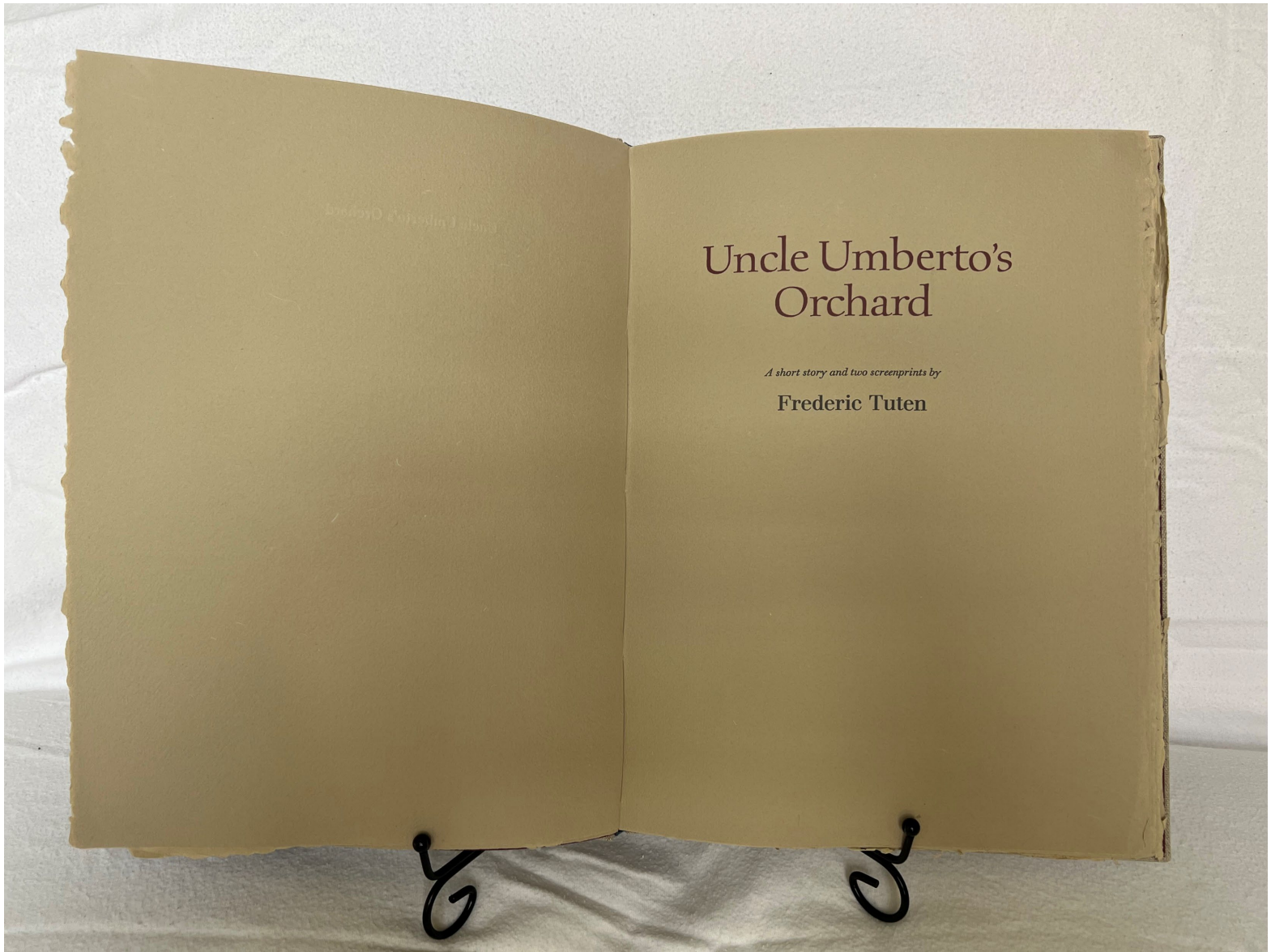
*Uncle Umberto's Orchard* in special-edition clamshell box with signed bonus print





*Uncle Umberto's Orchard* with standard-edition slipcase blind-stamped with pressmark





Title Page



THE TUG eased into the slip. I had seen it go downriver two hours earlier with the same marmalade cat sunning on the prow. Now he held a quivering mouse between his teeth.

"That's horrible," Marie said. "Why do cats always have to torment the poor mice?"

"I don't know if they think of it that way."

The tug's captain came to us straightaway. The gold shield on his hat shone like a baby sun.

"Hi, Dad," she said, giving him a cheery smile. He cradled a harvest of wild irises he had just cut from a swampy cove off Governors Island, cut for her, he said, without looking at me.

"There's a sweet dad," she said.

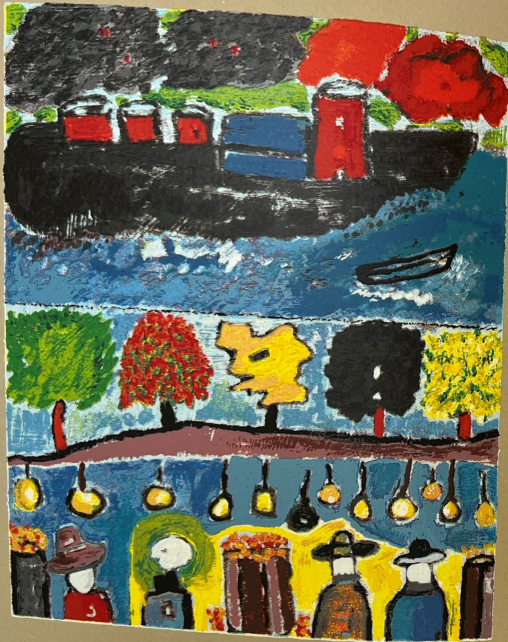
"They're beautiful," I said. "The irises."

"Have you been at sea much these days?" he asked in a not too interested way. "Have you been out there in the vast?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, not too truthfully, thinking how brief were my voyages, now that I had left off the oilers, finding in them nothing but great floating steel hulks run by computers. How few now were the great cargo freighters with their slow passages, and how few of them remained for me to sail.

A fireboat swept by with a fierce blast of its horn. The marmalade cat at the





IT WAS night when I finally arrived and docked at my uncle's landing. The house was pooled in darkness but all about it houses near and far glowed with a comforting mellow light. The half-moon gave enough of its shine for me to see that the fig trees were still shrouded. I had not been back since fall, and I thought I would take Marie's advice and stay the night and uncover the trees in the morning and let them enjoy their budding life in the sun.

The house was just as I had left it last. Not a stick of furniture had been removed or moved from its place, but I could feel everything had grown older. An empty, unloved house—like people—withers quickly.

For nostalgia's sake I went up to see my old room. Some of my books from my early school days straggled on their shelves. One was a Latin grammar, given me not for my Latin but for Good Conduct, a prize I had won by default. The best-behaved boy, a pale, friendless thing, had died because, we were told, he did not wear a hat in winter and he got sick and slid into pneumonia. None of us wore hats, thinking it unmanly, but only he had died. Some of my old clothes hung in the open closet. My blue Communion suit hung there, dreaming to see the inside of a church again. Maybe it would fit my son when it was his time. But that would have to be long after Marie and I had navigated all the seven seas and two oceans, and we had come round again to home and anchored ourselves to a fireplace. My first seaman's jacket with all its rips and tears hung in its dark quarters, longing



COLOPHON

Presented in an edition of 80 copies numbered and signed by the author/artist. Copies 1-20 are special-edition copies, each housed in a clamshell box with an additional screenprint individually numbered and signed by the artist. Gabriel Rummonds designed the book and oversaw the project. The text was printed on a Vandercook 219 press at Sandy Tilcock's lone goose press. Hand lettering by Jerry Kelly. The 14-point Walbaum type was cast by Winifred and Michael Bixler and passed through the composing stick by the printer. The special-order handmade paper is from Papeterie Saint-Armand. The screenprints, based on paintings by Frederic Tuten, were developed and printed by Gary Lichtenstein at Gary Lichtenstein Editions. The binding is by Jace Graf at Cloverleaf Studio. This short story appeared in *Conjunctions: 80, Ways of Water* in 2023.

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*F. Tuten*

# Gary Lichtenstein Editions

- ❖ *“Gary Lichtenstein is a uniquely inventive force in the art world. . . an extremely talented artist whose work has too often been invisible – not that you cannot see his work, but you might not be aware that it is his. Such is the fate of the collaborative artist.”* — Harry Philbrick, Philadelphia Contemporary
- ❖ *“Gary Lichtenstein, contemporary artist and master printmaker has given much to the American art world. Working closely with enormously inventive Avant-garde painters, sculptors and printmakers, he has advanced the visual arts in dramatic ways. His own creations represent continuous explorations and his genius for adding so much visual power to the creative work of colleagues fills a major gap.”* — Dr. Louis Zona, The Butler Institute of American Art
- ❖ *Artists:* Marina Abramovic, Cey Adams, Doug Argue, Karl Benjamin, Roz Chast, Robert Cottingham, Michael De Feo, Al Diaz, Jane Dickson, Oasa DuVerney, Chris “Daze” Ellis, Ron English, Shepard Fairey, Danielle Frankenthal, Mako Fujimura, Futura, Joanne Greenbaum, Gerard Hemsworth, Charles Hinman, Robert Indiana, Indie184, Alfred Leslie, John “Crash” Matos, John Miller, Rebecca Miller, Dave Navarro, John Newsom, Eric Orr, Yigal Ozeri, Gary Panter, Ken Price, James Prosek, Rubem Robierb, Shelter Serra, Duane Slick, Jessica Stockholder, Frederic Tuten, and Nola Zirin.
- ❖ *Exhibitions:* The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT (2010), and The Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, OH (2023).

[www.gleditions.com](http://www.gleditions.com)

# Original Plain Wrapper Press

- ❖ Gabriel Rummonds founded the original Plain Wrapper Press (PWP) in Quito, Ecuador, in 1966.
- ❖ In 1967, Rummonds moved PWP to New York City, where he first met the Verona-based handprinter Giovanni Mardersteig and he purchased a cast-iron Washington handpress.
- ❖ In 1970, Rummonds moved his publishing venture to Verona, Italy, where he remained until 1982.
- ❖ During this period in Verona, PWP printed one of the great treasures of 20th-century fine-press publishing: *Siete Poemas Sajones / Seven Saxon Poems* by Jorge Luis Borges with artwork by Arnaldo Pomodoro. Other editions featured texts by Anthony Burgess, Italo Calvino, John Cheever, Brendan Gill, and Dana Gioia. Illustrators included Antonio Frasconi, Fulvio Testa, and Joe Tilson.

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# IN MEMORIAM



Gabriel Rummonds (1931 – 2024) at the original Plain Wrapper Press in Verona, Italy (1971)

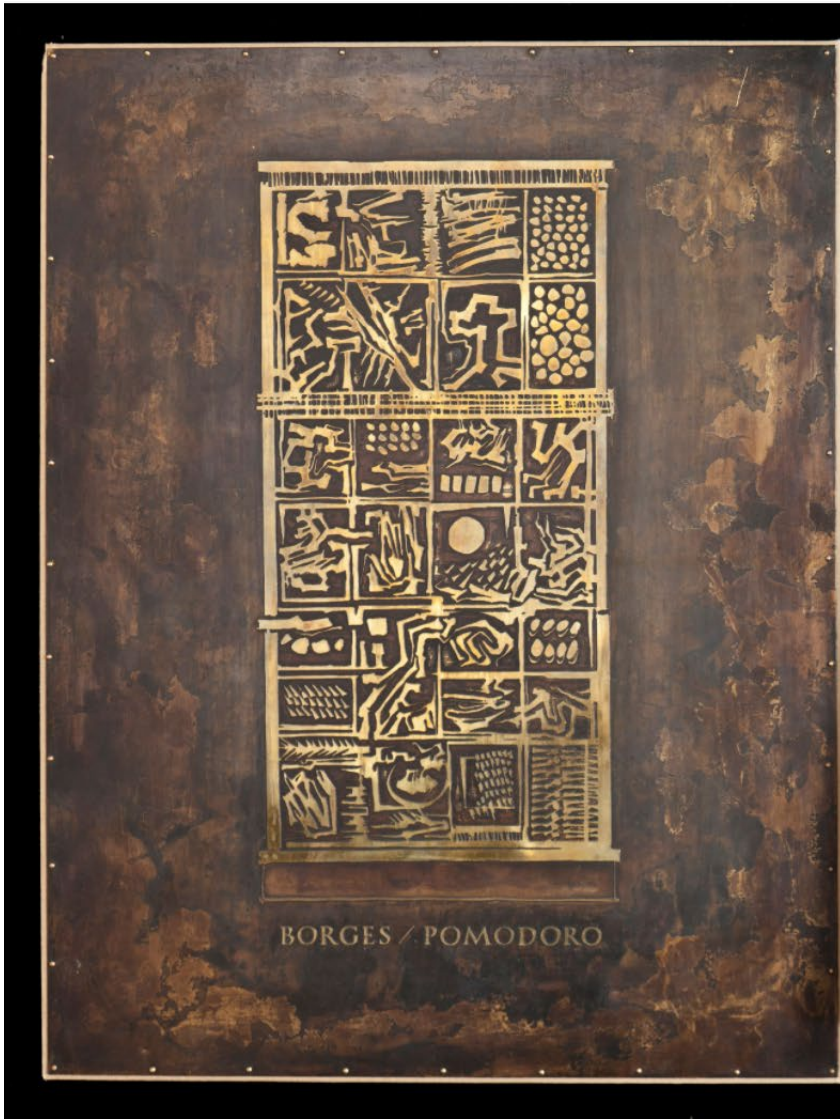
SIETE  
POEMAS  
SAJONES  
*JORGE LUIS BORGES*

SEVEN  
SAXON  
POEMS

*Impressions by* ARNALDO POMODORO

*Plain Wrapper Press*







# Plain Wrapper Press: *Collections*

## UNITED STATES

Brigham Young University

Columbia University

The Grolier Club

Harvard University

The Library of Congress

The Museum of Modern Art

The New York Public Library

Princeton University

Rochester Institute of Technology

The San Francisco Public Library

Southern Methodist University

Stanford University

Swarthmore College Libraries

University of Alabama

University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Los Angeles

University of Georgia

University of Kentucky

University of Michigan

University of North Carolina

University of Oregon

University of San Francisco

University of Texas, Austin

University of Utah

University of Virginia

Washington University in St. Louis

The Whitney Museum of American Art

## EUROPE

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

Biblioteca Civica di Verona

Biblioteca di Milano

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma

Bibliothèque Nationale de France



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