## David St. John

## New Morning (Notebook)

I.

I imagine I'll never know What made you pull the old Renault Over to the gravel shoulder of The road

its motor idling
As you pointed through the shifting mists
Of summer rain

across

The rolling slopes marked by low Curving fences of hand-stacked stones Off into the dense declensions Of green

\* \* \*

a cathedral
Stood at the peak of the valley
Its sheer rectangles of granite rising
Into those twin towers seen
From every road across this countryside
As every road led either to or past
That cool & indifferent

distant

White cathedral

\* \* \*

Holding the open bottle of Bordeaux You drove with one hand

turning up

The narrow circular lane of bricks
Still steaming in the late-day
Sun

you sat there

the wine upright

Between your legs your fingers opening & closing on the beige leather braid Wrapping the steering wheel So I sat there

the oak-&-iron doors
Of the cathedral dwarfing us
Dwarfing even the stained marble statue
Of the Virgin standing
On her small lawn surrounded by a few
Spare roses & fewer violets on
The side of the drive

beyond The garden's closed & unpainted wooden gate

Out of the heat

\* \* \*

out of the shadow
Of the low approaching storm
We stood in the sanctuary
beneath

Its sequence of vaulted ceilings & then moved silently up the aisles Passing yet not meeting the gaze Of each saint in his portico The cavernous air magnifying the echo Of each step

the hushed rustle of clothes Against our bodies against each other Magnifying the minute chirps Of the rosary beads coming together In the hands of a woman kneeling alone At the back of the pews

\* \* \*

I sat

Resting my hands on the polished wood Of the bench in front of me

then leaned forward Touching my forehead to the backs of my hands Not praying

not thinking

When I looked up you seemed so far away So far at the front of the pews & so motionless

you seemed simply A shadow thrown by one of the carved pillars Lining the aisle

then you moved just Slightly shaking your hair back only once & stood

turning from the ornate drama Of the altar & even In that dim light I could see your body Slowly falter

slowly sway

II.

Last summer in another country We stepped from a bar into the wake Of an August rain

the stone streets Streaked by the neon of every sign Along the crescent of the harbor Each dying out as the bars Closed down

where we stood a web
Of lights & small flames cast
By the steel mill across the water
Seemed to rise on the tide
To join the scattered lamps reflected off
The end of the nearby pier

only the last Few bartenders & drunks passed Sullen as monks

deep
In thought or failed thought
the sky
Blackened as clouds eclipsed the stars

\* \* \*

I had nothing I wanted to say & you said Nothing there was nothing left to ask Nothing mattered nothing

neither choices

Nor lies nothing mattered But I knew what I wanted & I told you so

\* \* \*

A morning a last new morning