

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

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