

At Rest, in Indianapolis

Back then, in Indianapolis
I stood for days and looked
Eastward
toward Richmond, Dayton
and beyond.

Youthfully solid and fearless
I ventured many feet
beyond city limits
blazing new trails
across Interstate 70
toward those grand palaces and mermaids
and soft, sighing evenings
and lush, dew-drenched mornings
that filled my imagination.

I asked her to show me the way
to guide me
deliver me—she
newer than I.
And we walked.

We were quite encouraged
by the marvelous exoticism
of Pittsburgh
but the endless walking
burdened me.
Perhaps, in Baltimore
I would discover a superior guide.
I never shared these thoughts aloud.

And she guided.
And we walked.

Throughout New York and London
I felt less pedestrian.
In Vienna she spoke
of Omaha
and I
of Zion.
She guided.
The Gobi was so dry
it burned my eyes.
Near Mogadishu we rested for a moment
and I could not remember
Pittsburgh.
And we walked.

Now blind, I followed
her voice through Bangkok
denying to some
that she was my guide.
As darkness cooled
one Santiago summer eve
I heard her sigh
and reached in hope
and touched her eyes
closed
that night
her body
lifeless
gently

in my arms
on my lap.
Rising with the sun
I lifted her
body out of the wet grass.
And I walked.

Wandering again
I felt burdened by my load
and remembered Indianapolis
and stopped to rest
here for now.

I've not the strength to carry her
body with me
any further.
My eyes cannot see
but my thoughts
sometimes drift
Westward
toward Terre Haute, Peoria
—and I rest here
holding my guide
close to me.

Joseph Hunckler