

Sirocco Sky

In Portugal is an old stone seaport
with a small dark hotel that took us in
to sleep a fitful night in a cold square room
that wreaked of insect poison.
The church bells behind our tomb rang all night
at twenty minute intervals,
loud enough to cancel all the dark Mediterranean dreams
that filled the hopeless night.

Pesetas, escudos, a kind of lukewarm cabbage soup
cloned white houses with blue tiles
and forests of cork whose bark they peeled.

Next day, in Spain, we ate at McDonalds.
Sad but true
and all the pickpockets and car thieves in Seville
were sorry
to see us leave so soon.
I can still see them,
a small army of men with operatic mustaches,
exotic troubadours, waving in the rear view mirror
as we crossed the Guadalquivir River.

Somewhere up ahead, Europe's southern shore,
windswept trees,
sand dunes like tangible cumulus clouds
anchored on earth,
solid enough to hike upon
but soft enough
to swallow our grief
as we climbed their backs
then threw ourselves high into the sirocco sky
to fall softly back to earth
on their pure white slopes.