2000

Couchée

David Staniunas

At Scotland Yard's,
unpopular haunt for the ghosts of drunkards,
I beheld the exchange of unkindly words
between priest and minister, both in beards,

both Irish, both wagering how much wine
could be communioned before it was a sin.
Amidst the spindrift of lager, they wiped their scruff
of dribbles and drabbles of drink and chanted, "This is enough!"

In subtle solidarity, both touched fingers under the single goblet,
taking turns with the spirit under dark florescent light,

exchanging the cup
in a game of reverse roulette
to see who would get
the last sip.

in a hotel bed
I held you like a breath, like
twine looped and tied around brown paper
skinny limbs loose enough
to hold and not hold down.
dim lamplight, distant gossiping
traffic a soft counterpart to
your stir, sigh, jet-lagged eyes.

how quiet fits sight - how a song
stays in memory. where
the hollow below my clavicle held your face,
where dawned on me, during afternoons,
*the whitening likeness of **album** and **aube**.*