



## Place of Arrival

The bus spits past the lake of sweet water  
where pilgrims refreshed and bathed  
long ago, long before the sacred way  
became a factory strip, a road through hell,  
diesel exhaust compounding Athens smog,  
refinery pipes towering above Eleusis  
like pillars tamping the earth.

When hell gulps the maiden,  
crops rebel, ground shrinks from grain;  
then Demeter, deluged with grief,  
dried with search, recovers her daughter,  
her first fruit, her inch of balance.  
The story is not just going through hell  
but getting out. Trapped by shadows,  
by forgetfulness, we've eaten Hades' seed.

Demeter's temple is deserted, the museum  
closed for replastering, the sky drizzling.  
Straying about the toppled stone  
I feel holy and ridiculous  
like the chamomile battling through cracks.  
The world's navel, where thousands  
solved the mystery of death,  
docks an idle merchant fleet  
in unemployed overpolluted Greece.

Not just through, but through the cracks—  
a fond laugh nearly dances from the maiden's well  
and the base of a vanished column  
echoes someone's arrival yesterday:  
gifts of barley, olives, flowers.  
Someone offered to rock with danger,  
to ripen with opportunity  
when the upper world needs rousing, to wake.

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