

*Katherine Soniat*

THE CATHEDRAL AT CHARTRES

Here, the great arched doorway,  
there, a bride so far

away she's a trail of light.  
Small woman, tiny groom

set out to commune  
at the end of a stone universe.

Today, all her good saints  
are an original mix

of dead plant and animal,  
this nuptial a planned potion

of spun tulle,  
roses and candle smoke.

She has but to turn  
and drag her own long train

out into the streets.  
From this threshold

I peer into dankness,  
the hot end of a summer morning

on my back.  
Row after row of polished pews,

then there they are again,  
my altared bride and groom.

The organ pours harmony  
over a pageantry of humans. Smiling,

the gargoyle has overseen such plans,  
these primary conciliations of man

and woman. He's seen so many  
he could doze off

in his walled garden of beatitudes.  
Or he could compose a heart

with thumping rhythms  
to inspire most any grandiosity—

snort of the bannered crusade,  
seaworn sighs of Magellan,

those brief exhalations  
when two or more gather to believe

there will be no future  
such as theirs.