

Two Poems · *Charles Simic*

CARAVAN

Pilgrim in sleeplessness,
In the wee hours
Following the centuries-old trade routes—
And my dream

Like the moon above,
Its faces of drowned Mariannes, Cynthias . . .
I've lots of faith in the way
The shoes hurt my feet,
And then say nothing.

Surely,

We are about to arrive
At the sandbound capital of X,
Its grayest porticoes,
Windowless, leaning towers,
Sharpshooters of cosmic solitude upon them
Receiving us one by one in their sights.

I with my gossamer camels,
My wind-up mice and whippoorwills,
My flock of black sheep
Made of some sort of cloud-substance—
And the naked slave

(Who is my heart)
Bearing the burden of my eyes
Tightly shut on this pillow
With its hand-stitched astrological signs,
And its whorehouse tassels.