

## Epithalamium · *Ellen Handy*

It is a cold day for August  
and the gray evening grows grayer  
as I travel westward along even, narrow valleys  
and across tumbled hills  
which are piled upon the smooth pastures  
like early morning bedclothes.  
A heavy rain, and later a heavy fog  
make driving difficult and private  
while climbing into the colder regions.  
Occasionally my earrings brush against my neck  
as I lean forward to see into the darkness,  
and my dress catches around my knees: unfamiliar.  
Self-contained, the car moves forward across the landscape.  
It is difficult to know what to think  
or whether to think at all.  
A hundred miles away right now  
she is probably dressing in an upstairs room  
pulling the slippery white material over her head  
while the cold rain outside the window dies away  
and the thick, cold fog comes up  
rising out of long slow rich furrows  
that lie darkly between rows of darkening corn.  
She is probably brushing back her heavy hair,  
tying ribbons at her narrow waist  
and choosing flowers to hold.  
In another room in another house  
he is also dressing,  
borrowing shoes, tying his tie  
and combing his hair again.  
He is busy with this and forgets to think.  
He does not look out the window.  
She is waiting.  
I drive toward them.