

The Register · *Madeline DeFrees*

All night I hear the one-way door sigh outward
into billboard glare. The ninth-floor
cul-de-sac left by the wrecker's ball, my new
apartment.

Inside the known hotel, décor of watered
silk and fleur-de-lis, the French Provincial
red-and-white, mine for the night, no more. A weak
bulb wears a halo through the dark.

The street
divides below the skid of rubber burning. One branch
leads to a hill's last word, one into morning.
Flying in place, hung from its thirst, hummingbird
in the honey throat of a flower.

Bless me,
Father, I have sins to spare and love
these relics of the hybrid years I spent afraid
to move. Chant of common life, field lilies, all
that labor, too cautious then to spin.
Not even Solomon would know these regal lily flowers,
translated fleur-de-lis my wall
provides, the glory flowers-*de-luce*, of light breaking
clean on the iris. I open
my eyes to the light.

Bless me, Father,
under heavy sun and hoping
still to make your life my own. I cannot nullify
the work this body's done
nor call each act religion. Wherever one road
joins another, blind, I think of you
and conjure up the loss. When two roads, gaining
speed, speed up to intersect, I cross
myself and lay the body down, arms open for what comes
to pass. Father, I am signing in.