From the Oriental Notebook

Iris DeMent

How drunk we were, each with the other
That marvelous night
When only the Asian darkness gave us light
And the watering canals were murmuring
And the black carnation's scent pierced, like a sting

And we walked alone through a city not ours
Through a savage song
And midnight heat–the Serpent coiled among
The constellations in the thick–starred skies
And we did not dare to turn and meet one another's eyes

And it seemed as if ages walked with us
Unseen, and as if an invisible hand were
Striking a tambourine
And there were stranger sounds, like
Something we must mark
Secret signals that whirled about us there, the dark

Thus once, and only once, we walked
Together, when of a sudden the moon like a
Diamond sailboat swam into view
Our parting meeting, the single encounter, we knew

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