

## THE EXPATRIATES

*William John Corrington*

They cannot put the rainbow out of mind  
or lay aside its fictive end:

After all, there were no droughts, no  
serious storms—only violet rain  
occasionally at dusk, a tender mysterious  
weather spelled out across fresh lawns  
in sunsplashed characters and stopped  
with topaz cloud.

In the numb arenas of residence hotels,  
in polyhilarious predictable cafes,  
late disenchantments fade, recent magic palls;  
the old world's seasoned reasonable pavanne  
cannot replace the bunched gregarious  
racket of the new.

And so on peaceful boulevards,  
in unpretentious parks where epic grass  
and vintage trees are not dyed neon red  
or branched with chrome,  
the very silence, the sky's serene bouquet,  
unlimbers old restraint and somehow,  
like anxious parents on a holiday  
who sense their child's least likely needs,  
they conjure a remembered patchwork land—  
its raw expensive wilderness, its bizarre finesse:  
they scheme somehow the rainbow in reverse:  
wide promises, warm possibilities;  
broad rural names hummed jubilant like paper  
on a comb. They sip their alien aperitifs  
halfheartedly, and gaze across the square—  
they sigh, breathe deep, and find there is no air.