Afternoon in Carolina

Alice Moser

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Recommended Citation
The boy on the bicycle mounts the tilted street,  
Gaining the shade, the hedge-rowed walk.  
Below the hill the small shops huddle,  
Reticent for all their obvious talk.

The heat now is sticky as a burr,  
Only the trees have pushed it out of place—  
Through which comes an aloof walker, a symbol:  
England in exile with a sharper face.

A dreamer sits, weighted with heat  
And noise of war (the practice planes  
Roaring over the leaves like rumor winds  
In Fall) immobile with imagined pains.

The dreamer patterns snares to catch his mind,  
Baffled with heat, tranced by the loud  
Bellies of planes, mocked by a giant dog  
Which sleeps like Nero, heavy-pawed and proud.

Like marching soldiers, pines descend the hill,  
Arrested by a brisk salute of air.  
The town beneath veiled by the smoking mill  
Seems made by distance something rare.

The new discoverers of a land explored  
Bring speculation to divine the scene:  
Built against chaos lies the desperate town . . .  
Cool in its anarchy, the unbridled green.

Saved from lost centuries this hill  
Teases the milling worlds. Yet here move on  
The unfathoming creatures under the still  
Surface, unmolested by the moon.