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A Dedication

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The genuine has fled a century
 Ago. Like smoke, the fiddle music fades
 To air above the dance hall; into river,
 Wind, and legend blow the weightless words.
 Honest ghosts lie mute beneath blackberry
 Fields, remembering bright veins and lodes
 Before the stars collapsed on their endeavor.

—JOAN ANGEVINE SWIFT

A DEDICATION

We stood by the library. It was an August night.
 Priests and sisters of hundreds of unsaid creeds
 passed us going their separate pondered roads.
 We watched them cross under the corner light.

Freights on the edge of town were carrying away
 flatcars of steel to be made into secret guns;
 we knew, being human, that they were enemy guns,
 and we were somehow vowed to poverty.

No one stopped or looked long or held out a hand.
 They were following orders received from hour to hour,
 so many signals, all strange, from a foreign power:
 But tomorrow, you faltered, peace may flow over the land.

At that corner in a flash of hope we two stood;
 that glimpse we had will stare through the dark forever:
 on the poorest roads we would be walkers and beggars,
 toward some deathless meeting involving a crust of bread.

—WILLIAM STAFFORD