

Tour Guide

Farewell visits, the packing, the debts
a celebration of unbalance. Remember

the temple dance, my brother says. Flute
whispers, the orbit of present and future

breath, rhythm and movement in a cultural
pose. Don't miss the arsenal and operahouse

father warns. Be sure to take in foolishness
and poetry. But I fall over a beacon of light

find and lose wallets, while nubile women
wrap me in campaign cloaks, stout tippling,

political songs. Still I keep my principles;
that's a great deal, between the cathedral

and the Marshal's mausoleum. But mother's
so worried she thinks my letter says

I've begun to think the whole tone through
to take the pure and sensual as one
to look, to tremble and to lose.

—*N.C. Hough*