

Maiden Voyage (for A.M.)

There are coordinates to fame
you are not hard to find
when I finally meet you in the bar
it is too late
things the darkness hides
the map-lines of our faces
We drink and laugh
navigating our lives like two friends
back from a skirmish, not a war
you announce you could live in this city
in a water-mark I plot
the main street of your town

Later I reveal you to the strangers
those who read you like a book
in the harsh light Our voices
no longer searching for common ground
plugged in to the crowd
we lose whatever it was
we had begun to find
your face in contour now
sixteen years of moving into the wind

But for awhile in the Victory Lounge
it seems like once-upon-a-time
spices and Cathay, no maps
before we knew whole continents
were in the way
the maiden voyage, there
on the quay the girls
between the lines
who let me hold their hands

— *Andy Wainwright*