From The Oriental Notebook

Iris DeMent

How drunk we were, each with the other,
that marvelous night,
when only the Asian darkness gave us light,
and the watering canals were murmuring
and the black carnation's scent pierced
like a sting.And we walked alone through a city not ours,
through a savage song
and midnight heatâ€”the Serpent coiled among
the constellations in the thick-starred skies,
and we did not dare to turn and meet one another's eyes.And it seemed as if ages walked with us,
unseen, and as if an invisible hand were
striking a tambourine,
and there were stranger sounds, like
something we must mark:
secret signals that whirled about us there
the dark.Thus once, and only once, we alked
together, when of a sudden the moon like a
diamond sailboat swam into view
our parting meeting, the single encounter
we knew.

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