

# 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.  
And should that night return to you also,  
mind my wish, however belated, oh, be kind  
and send me, waking or dreaming, this my  
choice; an Asian reed pipe's slender voice.

Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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