Aliki Barnstone

Sadness

Rilke says sadness is the moment the future enters us
By surprise and pushes us into the unknown.
The handsome bartender says, "Your drinks are on me"
—And leans across the counter—"What'll it be?"
Alcohol is heat in my ears as I catch my reflection
In the mirror, happy flirting without forethought.
But days later alone the question comes back:
What *will* it be?
and I remember moments with you
When time raced quickly around us like a romping young dog
And we were amused. Today time reminds me of the hound
Knowingly guarding the underworld. Sadness slips in,
Doesn't it? even in the gentle pleasures of the body
Which pass too and remind us of loss.
Rilke says
Be attentive and patient with sadness because it is our way
Of learning through solitude. In your eyes I see
Your solitude watching mine. I note the line in your cheek
When you smile. How attentive and patient we must be
With sadness separating us;
we know each other through that unknown surprise.

This content downloaded from 198.108.24.33 on Wed, 13 Nov 2013 13:17:31 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions