

oily water. He walked as far as the beach of Malagueta to get his head right and let the fear settle. He recognized at once that there was heroin in the vicinity of Malagueta by night. The heavy sea was constrained on tight lines. He sat in the dark on the sand and listened to the night, the traffic; the fast sibilant hiss of the Andaluz voices.

He reasoned that if he didn't sleep there was no way he could dream about his father.

**K**arima was about forty and thin and kind of good-looking in a skanky way and with sexy bad teeth when she opened her mouth to take in huge, derisive gulps of her cigarette smoke, as if it couldn't possibly feed the burning want of her Saharan lungs. Her thin face folded to a grimace on the intake, creased again to smile as she exhaled. She steered her small, neat car through the new suburb set high in the Málaga hills.

You have a face, she said. It's like what you call in the films? In the fairy story? In the Walt Disney?

I don't know if I like the sound of this, Maurice said.

I mean the little creature, she said. In the woods. The word?

She shook her head as she drove—she could not find the word. She turned onto an unfinished road at the top of the new development. Large, ominous birds hovered to hunt above the red dirt of the hills. There was a sensation of lizards. The white apartments were clean as picked bone and appeared to be untenanted—there were no cars. Way beneath them the Mediterranean was brilliant in the winter sun.

Elf! she said.

Okay, he said.

You are an elf, she said. Your face.

I take no offense, he said. You mean that I have an elfin look. Is what you're trying to say to me.

Elfin?

Meaning elf-like, he said, or with elf-type characteristics.

And certainly they were by this point wondering what it would be like to fuck each other.

Very strange, she said.

His mother said always they must have found him in the Ummera Wood. Even as a kid, in the stroller, he was tuned to odd frequencies, it seemed. Karima parked the car beside a raw apartment unit, as yet unplastered. There were no people anywhere to be seen. She wore low-rider jeans and a pale lemon Adidas polo; he did not recognize the make of the trainers. She lit another cigarette and smiled at him to show her awful, yellow, allur-

ing teeth, also the warm dark of her maw. She brought him inside the unfinished apartment and there displayed a hundred kilos of graded Moroccan hashish stacked neatly. The extent of it certainly was agricultural. She said that tonight or even the next few days would be good. He could send his people. They could get together at the port of Málaga late on.

And this is the way it will go, she said. You don't ever need to see Tangier.

They went outside again and got into her car. She went by a different route and turned down an unpaved avenue.

Something else we see, she said.

She brought him to another unfinished apartment. As soon as she unlocked the door he could smell the stench of human filth. A man wearing just a pair of yellow vinyl football shorts was chained to the chrome leg of a kitchen island—he was blindfolded also and gagged. There was no furniture; the walls were

[Poem]

## FADED BY THE RAIN

By J. V. Foix, from *Daybook 1918: Early Fragments*, which was published in September by Northwestern University Press. Foix (1893–1987) was a poet and a journalist engaged in the Catalan nationalist movement. Edited and translated from the Catalan by Lawrence Venuti.

**F**aded by the rain, hidden for the entire afternoon among barrels in a narrow alleyway, we boys from my street agreed to wait till darkness descended to put on our purple suits and set an enormous funnel in the middle of the square, identical in diameter to the square itself and as tall as the tower of Can Pomeret. After the last light in the village had gone out, we painted the houses in the square black, and between the roofs we hung backdrops that represented a few gray clouds or a column of smoke from a locomotive on a misty day. When everything was ready, we hid beneath the arches of the pharmacy to spy on how the moon would let herself be attracted by that ingenious aluminum snare. But when midnight arrived, the doors of the bakery opened with a tremendous din, a woman came out carrying six loaves stacked on her head, and the spell of that night was broken.