Athens, The Departure

2012

 As if Ares’ shield fanned flames up from Hades,

my husband and I were faint and querulous-

astray on our search for the Areopagus,

a marble outcrop, where, escaping a mob,

the apostle was brought, anguished to find

an Athens encrusted in idols, and blind.

We seek shelter in a palace garden, strewn

with temple columns and a broken frieze. I wonder:

“There’s not one stone stacked upon another...” [[1]](#footnote-1)

“…resistors, buried where they fell…civil war a blunder,”

proclaimed a tour group paused to chat at our trees,

oblivious of the blessings from Dryadian-breeze,

I’m alarmed, but object, “They’ll resurrect, the end

is not yet. Look! Their spirits live in those protestors.”

Weaving through a lively plaza, wiping eyes of tear gas,

we joined a flock of pilgrims swarming up the Acropolis.

This horde shied away when we deigned to read Acts[[2]](#footnote-2);

most purchased idols, some worshiped new hats.

I waited, impatient, for the ferry to Patmos.

My husband looked dead while he dozed on a bench.

When Zeus threw a thunderbolt, you muttered, “Repent!”

hence Athena cried rain, hailed as a blessed event.

As tears poured down the set marble faces,

our sun was lost in the god’s empty traces.

1. Matthew 24:1-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Acts 17:16-34 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)