Athens, The Departure

1999

As if from scepters of the ancient gods,

gold lingered in the settling day.

My darling daughter, grown too lithe,

and a bit too fierce, would soon steal away

and sail with friends to find

Ulysses’ wine-dark mind.

Our last day of touring together,

an ex-colonel drives and serves as guide.

He had served on Greek and Turkey borders

and lamented all the losses on his side.

I urged her, tune your ears.

“It’s *his*- story, who cares?”

The heat had shut all gates at Delphi.

Our colonel, still undaunted, shone

to sneak us past the Oracle throne.

My haughty daughter soldiered on alone,

climbing towards the temple sanctums.

She returned transformed by phantoms.

Disquieted, I said, “It’s just the heat.”

“Mommy, I felt them striving- ancient souls

and an athlete- through the gods, she spoke!”

A gust arose, flags fluttered on their poles.

Later, into the teal-bright sea she dove,

shimmering like the numinous dream she wove.