

Poems

Terry Gifford

In the Sorbonne

we discuss
 the quality
 of yellow light

in the painting
 and in the poem
 about the painting.

The grey heads
 nod at the
 impossibility

of 'yellow light'.
 The students smile
 at memories

of yellow light
 through curtains
 on delicate hair.

Beyond
 the delicious
 discourse of the room,

framed
 by high windows
 of history,

is a pale light
 on soft stone
 impossible

as yet
 to be named
 'yellow'.

5 Feb 2010

The Forgotten Valley

Sella, Spain

for Christopher North

Between the eagle
and the orchid,
the nightingales
orchestrated the air
across the river
with elaborate
clarity.

Between the overgrown,
unwalked valley
(eagle escaping us)
and the scruffy
abandoned terraces
of blackened trees
(Ophrys scolopax
almost escaping us),
the tall, fluttering
poplars (their duet
inescapable
from invisible
voiceboxes).

Between the airborne
unexpected and the
boot level unexpected,
the seasonal gift
for a damp day,
low cloud forcing
the choice of walk
below the village.

Between the giving
and the receiving,
between the gliding
and the still,
between the eagle
and the orchid,

full attention,
open heartedness,
small joys
all round,
all around,
always.