

JEFFERSON HOLDRIDGE

Two Poems

Biancheria

A lamp-lit image of a lowered face
Beside a window for the air's relief,
Slowly searching for convincing proof,
For family crests, an abstract motif
Carved in great oak marriage chests,
For a faint, but chosen woof
Woven through yards of netted lace,
For a serpentine naive rose
Or pigs and chickens in a country scene.
A pattern that in pieces flows
Across a large and light bedspread
And guides a hand that sews and tests
Ornate, traditional designs
With wide webs of space between.
Travailing fabric, hope and dread,
The needle's eye of secret minds.

Ferragosto

From hill to sea, they face
The twilight. The landscape pulls
Beyond, before the church.
Faith lasts in rituals
Sprung from sense of place,
Surviving every schism
Between the native song
And breast of what's alive.
Waves and hillsides glow.
Shadows grow long.
A dove on its hidden perch
Sings in sad rhythm,
And mystifies the drive—
A great stained-glass window.
Who cares if cultures die
Wane, change form?
The summer evening's warm.
Restless Madonnas waver.
Candles are raised high
Like crests upon the sea.
The voices have their savour.