

Julian Reilly

THE CITY SHORE

At poet's shrine men pierce their cheeks
in rhythmic chants forget themselves and time
in pursuit of soft oblivion, the divine.
The words become a stillness
wherein they lose themselves;
the chanter's chant the storm's eye.

Between desert and desert skies
there are no questions.
Let us ride out to an empty horizon
hot wind among white scarves—
here all things are purged of life and death.
At desert's edge tombstones
define the edge of emptiness.

Beyond acceptance is silence—
the inverted city shimmers above the horizon
a reflection emptied of desires.
A one-legged man hopping through the stillness
of the midday heat.
Beggars in the dust and filth
or flies on a rotten horse:

The sun burns all.