One Night In Balthazar

Fanny Howe

The hotel bar downstairs
was dirty and dark and almost empty
except for him whom I didn't know

I lost my balance
because evil is aroused by absence

Outside on the island
a brick city had grown up and old

A person could only nibble on its shadows

Where was my beloved?

The cornerstone was familiar
but unrecognizable
and I didn't understand why infinity

was seeping into my hair

Somebody said:
"He's out of his bottle"

I guess it meant
Temporarily out of service and empty.
But then there was Arsene
beside the last remaining cabin
wandering with his eyes on the camera

Dynamite in his pocket
and a piece of thread
to trap a rabbit.

Evil is a growing thing
It has its own gravity
and never answers to its name
It is a hole into chaos. It is real

Arsene held me in his arms
He was drunk as usual
and his nipple smelled of rum

But still I loved him—
loved him madly!—
as if he was the one