

## WALKING AT NIGHT

We roam the streets at night, lovers  
heady with perfumes: here are the lushest gardens  
where nothing rots or grows still.  
We've made each street again and again: precise  
as childhood. Streetlights glow overhead  
like the teeth of a huge zipper; the universe  
steals in when the zipper's open. At the end  
is the brilliant villa upon the hill,  
where the world ends. I do not know what it is.

After days of love, argument has wrenched the house,  
brawling that makes the air spark and the bloodstream  
seek its questing. We draw back from the hill.  
I walk to the house of my mistress where we pool  
attention on our bodies, stick pins in our marital secrets  
then wander naked in her desert, looking for answers.  
Returning, I feel unspent euphoria. Its place  
is the brilliant villa upon the hill  
where the world ends. I do not know what it is.

The pleasure of returning is to rebuild.  
The same materials never lie in the same way twice.  
We are a family sifted by days. Nothing is still.  
We cleave together like tender and crazy tapestry  
sewing images with deft or indifferent movements  
then reaching back, repeating what doesn't suit us  
until we get it right. I include my fear, it  
is the brilliant villa upon the hill  
where the world ends. I do not know what it is.

We are sped against our friends, decide to win.  
Make another country and return. She runs off to kill  
a weakness, but finds her own and stays until the sun  
fades upon her thighs. I get drunk with friends, shout  
up revolt in a room filled with publicists. By morning  
both of us are famous. By midday our children are grown,  
by evening someone has died. My answer  
is the brilliant villa upon the hill  
where the world ends. I do not know what it is.

(from Philip Salom — *Sky Poems* and also *New and Selected Poems* p 125)