

The Last Tango

Wendy Bishop

Marlon Brando, in *The Last Tango*
Roared out his unclear grief
As the Paris trains roared back,
Passing over elevated girders.
They did not simply hide the sound
But seemed to absorb it—absorbed
The entire emptiness of dance halls alone,
Of marriage, of sex rough and fast
Like some deaths,
Of a *self* so wounded
It took a long train
To seal off the scream
And send him on his way.

You faced me on the street,
Traffic, passing like a disconnected train,
Stealing some of the words you said,
Highlighting others as the bright incurious gaze
Of shoppers highlighted us both.
It was a scene:
You taking your luggage from the car,
Me watching in the continuous rain,
You saying things so difficult
I couldn't hear them,
Me wanting to throw my head back
And scream
But unable to do it.