

James B. Nicola

Postcard from *Republicca*

on the reverse, the image of Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Theresa* at Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

The pillars stand as so many trees
turned to marblestone to attend her
and guide me along their alabaster path.
There she is frozen up on the wall
of her dimlit chapel to the side in the deep
of an enchanted, echoing, illustrated
forest, stuck forever, discovered
in her moment of being attacked by a wild,
loving angel, her writhing, her embarrassment,
her glee, her glory, suspended forever,

just off the *Piazza della Republicca*

where, as the belltower chimes every midnight,
families, cafés and *Eh Cumpari* bands transform
to the circus of a red light district,
the spell as regular as Cinderella's.
Without the angels, and with flesh in lieu
of marblestone, and with cars, horns,
colored lights and catcalls standing for
the guiding alabaster, one is led to
an ecstasy and holiness no statue
can know but as a dimlit memory,

or voyeur's faithful interpretation.

James B. Nicola has had poems appear four times in *Muddy River Poetry Review* and recently in the *Southwest Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Rattle*, and *Poetry East*. His nonfiction book *Playing the Audience* won a Choice award. His two poetry collections, published by Word Poetry, are *Manhattan Plaza* (2014) and *Stage to Page: Poems from the Theater* (2016). A Yale graduate, James has been giving both theater and poetry workshops at libraries, literary festivals, schools, and community centers all over the country. More at sites.google.com/site/jamesbnicola.