

Anticipating Yesterday, Remembering Tomorrow

A white stern-wheeler slides
downriver for Ohio.

Its paddles
plow the river rough until
they seem to falter and reverse.

I've seen the same illusion
in the backward-spinning tires
of a car accelerating forward,
props revolving clockwise
counterclockwise, trains departing
from a town departing from a train
departing.

To break the spell,
I focus on the stern-wheel's hub
and slide into a memory of Paris...

At Notre Dame a life
I seemed to know preceded me.

On Montparnasse I told myself
I must have come that way
before I came that way.

No matter where I walked,
I kept retreating into what
came next.

Even the Seine
deceived me with its waves blown
east, its current coasting west...

The wheel I watch keeps wheeling

me behind, ahead, and around.

I clench my lashes to the wind

and wait.

When I release,

I know a place I've never seen.

I see a time I've known

forever.

Is it tomorrow, yesterday,

today?

I drink a breath.

I breathe my life away.