

DERMOT BOLGER

## A TRAM STOP IN EASTERN EUROPE

How can I justify listing you among the women in my life?  
I never knew your name. We shared no act of intimacy  
Beyond kissing cheeks when my airport-bound tram came.

Yet, with many supposedly significant encounters forgotten,  
I still recall becoming aware of a luminosity within you,  
And your innate courtesy after you saw me, waiting alone

At a tram stop in some university town I found myself in.  
Having attended my reading, you offered to wait with me,  
Feeling that my departure needed some degree of ceremony.

On that quiet street you gave the only gift you could offer,  
The solace of your company, while shyly sharing the hopes  
You possessed as a confident twenty-year-old European.

You described your joy at holding a friend's new-born child,  
Envyng her sense of fulfilment, but wary of such entrapment  
When you yearned to explore beyond your parents' horizons.

I've no idea where fate led you. I only recall your *joie de vivre*  
As you laughed, making me conscious of keeping you late  
For the bustle of your busy life. I knew that those moments,

When we waited side by side, were all I would remember  
From the planes and anonymous hotels of that reading tour.  
You were not anonymous. Your generosity made me aware

Of unglimped lives in towns where I only spent one night.  
I knew you would remain standing, taking time from your life,  
Hand raised in salutation after my tram passed beyond sight.