

Mistake

Mistake, how would I dare
speak directly to you
when you appear dressed in crimson
and step with the dignity
of many centuries.
Your hands are white, smelling of soap;
in speaking you use secret words
drawn from the *Summa Theologiae*
and the Roman Missal.
In the evening you fold
your stole, alb, and cassock on a chair.
You hang your biretta on a hanger,
along with your gray, coiffed hair.
On your nightstand you put away
your hands smelling of soap.
Suddenly you have taken the shape
of a little wet bird
shivering with fear.