

Readings for November 1st, 2009

from: La Vita Nuova

O pilgrims who go thinking,
perhaps of things not present,
do you come from so far a place,
as your faces demonstrate,
that you do not weep when you pass
through the centre of the grieving city,
like those people who do not know
any part of its heavy sorrow?
If you will stay to hear my wish,
surely my heart of sighs tells me
that you will then travel weeping.

Dante Alighieri

My Dead Friends

I have begun,
when I'm weary and can't decide an answer to a bewildering
question

to ask my dead friends for their opinion
and the answer is often immediate and clear.

Should I take the job? Move to the city? Should I try to conceive
a child
in my middle age?

They stand in unison shaking their heads and smiling-
whatever leads
to joy, they always answer,

to more life and less worry. I look into the vase where Billy's

ashes were-
it's green in there, a green vase,

and I ask Billy if I should return the difficult phone call, and
he says, yes.
Billy's already gone through the frightening door,
whatever he says I'll do.

Marie Howe

A Walk

My eyes already touch the sunny hill,
going far ahead of the road I have begun.
So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;
it has its inner light, even from a distance-

and changes us, even if we do not reach it,
into something else, which, hardly sensing it, we already are;
a gesture waves us on, answering our own wave...
but what we feel is the wind in our faces.

Ranier Maria Rilke