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Birthday in Saronis

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JAMES WELCH studied writing at the University of Montana. His poems have appeared in many magazines and anthologies, and his first book, *Riding the Earthboy* 40, was published in 1971 by World. After a year in Greece, he has returned to Missoula, Montana.

BIRTHDAY IN SARONIS

To come this far a man
wants light, maps, figures
carved in stone the width
of a dwarf. Who needs women
quick and bucking, whistling
slogans, autumn in its mink?

That moth flutters in my ear.
He knows a brave time.
A radio speaks in Greek
to ships aground. Why have
you come here, poor dark dog,
why leave those places
panting in your chest?

The blind bouzouki knows
another song. Pain begins
to whisper peptic answers
to its strings. Two drinks more
I'll leave this town. I know
these children wish me well.

Well now, well enough, goodbye.
Don't give me that . . .
Sing to me, dark frog. Behind
those marble lids you see
a future rich with fat.

In dreams I see the two roads meet
cross each other, on and on.
November, another birthday—
ouzo man, where is your lover gone?