Waiting for the Sun

NINA BENNETT

Venice Beach is smaller than I imagined,
not large enough to hold its history
of Morrison perched on a rooftop writing
let's swim to the moon, let's climb through the tide.
Clumps of sand squish between my toes
as I search for shade. Patchouli wafts
from t-shirt shops, hangs in the heat
of an August afternoon. Manzarek's
riffs ride the surf, idolatrous screams
of teen age girls echo in the screech of seagulls.

The sun has already set on the small bistro
by Pere Lachaise cemetery. Wrought
iron chairs stacked against the patio wall
signal the end of another day.
Alain, the manager, listens to LA Woman
as he gathers empty wine bottles,
glasses with lipstick stains dark as merlot.
Mouth stretched in the grimace of a yawn,
he pours a drink, raises it
in silent toast to the chanteur et poete
who rests on the nearby hillside. One more
turns into two; he checks the locked
front door, lets himself out the back.
When the music's over,
turn out the lights.