



Image from The Vintage Inn

Iván Arguëlles

My Life: A Spring Afternoon 1953

but with such words did Juno revile Venus—
so it fell out one spring day the lesson
to repeat and scan each line of verse
to memorize archaic constructs to sing !
sun-glazed memories open the streets
and trees contend with sky for mystery
how many or which of us will die first ?
riddle and nomenclature of adolescence
what a distance to the goal post of sport
the divinities gathered in a single spot
aloft in the illustrated empyrean regard
with irony or spite the contests and gear

as the kids gaggle and divert the self in
mere illusory play the blocks of marble
the cement or asphalt paving the monument
standing in the middle of nowhere so it seems
did Juno revile Venus with such words of
execration and envy fame the desired mile-stone
furious endeavors of fictitious gods on each
and every page to die alone with remembrance
of them decades hence and the vast echolalia
of the once going back and forth exchanging
hands with the girlfriend whose domicile
is the motel at the entrance to Hades
how many steps to the rear or sideways
into the drugstore for a trance sipping sodas
a bracelet glimmering in the dimly lit
did Juno execrate Venus and her son Cupid
and to lay waste ancient cities of language
the constant theme as years pass and imagine
darkened shorelines and boats hauled up
for caulking and grizzled sailors shouting
into the loud in a Greek dialect of rock and
and gravel and who will be the first to plunge
and the recitations on victory day and sad
and tremulous the waving goodbye and rains
that will fold their windows and night
a world of lost sounds the chaste stars above
a-glitter with skirts of profound enigma
how will one recognize the other afterwards ?

Iván Arguëlles is one of America's most important living poets. He has published many books; his latest, a two-volume collection, *The Unfinished Breath*, will appear in 2023. A collection of elegies, largely dedicated to his late twin brother Joe, entitled *Talking to Valum Votan*, will be out in early 2024.