

Reading

The room is long and cold with too many green chairs for intimacy
but old friends come in and smiling kiss wrinkled cheeks
greeting each other in foreign accents after all these years
followed by middle-aged ratty poet-types and grungy
à la mode younger artsy-tartsy varieties,
longhaired men, shorthaired women, a smattering
of ambiguous sorts, well-groomed smartly dressed
(considering the time and place) academics,
eyes expressing a reasonable disinterest
so we're really glad when the carefully disheveled laureate
ends his rambling bio-intro and the old man of the hour,
smooth head barely rising above the podium,
black-suited shoulders lost against the forest green curtain,
adjusts his spectacles, finds the page and finally speaks.