

Fearing Paris

Suppose that what you fear
could be trapped
and held in Paris.
Then you would have
the courage to go
everywhere in the world.
All the directions of the compass
open to you,
except the degrees east or west
of true north
that lead to Paris.
Still, you wouldn't dare
put your toes
smack dab on the city limit line.
You're not really willing

to stand on a mountainside,
miles away,
and watch the Paris lights
come up at night.
Just to be on the safe side
you decide to stay completely out of
France.
But then the danger
seems too close
even to those boundaries, and you feel
the timid part of you
covering the whole globe again.
You need the kind of friend
who learns your secret and says,
"See Paris first."

Marsha Truman Cooper

