

A BEN MANIFESTAR LE COSE NUOVE

**JOEL
STREET**

The old pope sits on a green upholstered chair
that had been the family heirloom of a friend
and now it's in the end, narrow and crowded,
of the sitting room of his retirement suite.

He finishes the paper. If it's Wednesday then
works alone might do the saving trick.
"Check your Augustine," he thinks, "before you steer
the ship of faith." And as he leans to sleep

the cushion slips from the green upholstered chair
and the white cassock gets tangled, and he dreams
of a monumental ziggurat: even in Akkad
they say there ought to be an Albert Speer.

Who says that? They do. It bustles here
like in no Bavarian market town,
like no papal piazza that he's lived above.
He holds the calling card of someone he was told

to meet, but can't find time for that amid
his slow ascent: the body's a body, even here.
Alone on top he watches the everycolor smoke
like bubbles in a garden on a summer day.