

Neil Ardit

Memorabilia

The Italian passenger
standing next to my father,
with his trench coat
cinched
and his hands
buried in his pockets,
looks like Camus
in a saturnine mood.
He stares a hole in the lens.
My father smiles,
brief case in hand.
He is nineteen,
and on his way
to America,
his oyster.
The photographer,
a passenger
we cannot see,
has an eye
for composition:
frames them
between the legible body
of their refueling
Trans-World-Airlines
Boeing 307
Stratoliner
(if I'm not mistaken)
and a sign that reads,
"Gander Airport."
The shutter clicks.
"Encore une, s'il vous plaît,"
my father says.
The shutter clicks again.
He takes his camera back.
The Italian passenger
lights a cigarette.

Later, in a diner
in New York City,
or a room in Baton Rouge,
my father sits,
thumbing through his prints,
turns this one over,
and writes on the back:
with Italian passenger,
Newfoundland, 1947.