

144. The Paris Dirt

*mai, France 1994
for maman*

The Paris Dirt
and
Cuban cigarillos
arrived
in the yellow postal
box
from France
marked for *douane*
“*Parfum*”.

(It all depends
on what
you
consider—
aroma.)

Pinkish, chalky
dirt from
under the Tour
Eiffel
taken in an almost
midnight sun.
To be spread
like the
ashes of
memory on her grave.

Planted like seed
to sow more
France-et-Maine
piled on
generation
after
generation
in payment
for
her
Jean Patou
Vogue Paris Original
haute couture
she
sewed for me.

I haul Paris
 home, graveside
to her
so she can say:
“I never went to Paris,
but that never stopped
it
 from
 coming to me.”

Rhea Côté Robbins