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***POETRY AS THE “CIVILIZED DESTINATION” OF THE MIND IN
JAMES MERRILL’S WATER STREET***

Abstract: *This article analyses the volume of poems entitled “Water Street” by the American poet James Merrill, as approached from a Proustian perspective. Proust is the most significant personality who has influenced Merrill’s literary activity as concerns involuntary memory; knowledge acquired through recreating one’s own life (through the act of writing); and the literary creation becoming not only a reiteration of the events of one’s life, but an interpretation of the self. In short, the act of giving up the cliché, the ontological mask (and any other artificial form) in favor of the artistic experience represents that literary itinerary which posits that poetry is the only “civilized destination” of James Merrill’s soul and mind.*