

Barbara Crooker

Dusk at La Baie des Anges, 1932

~Raoul Dufy

Dufy studied *couleur-lumière*, the effect of light on color, turned the Mediterranean into a pool of flat cerulean. No wind ruffles the water; this is sea as tablecloth or slab of marble. That smooth. That cool. Here in Virginia, blue jays have been interrupting my morning with their imperious squawks. Their feathers, the blue fire of the Côte d'Azur in summer. In Dufy's oils, the sky sings hyacinthine. There is no motion; even the lone palm on the right hand side of the painting holds its breath. The figures in the foreground are poised, waiting for night to come down and paint them midnight, cold steel, indigo

The Green Blouse, 1919

~Pierre Bonnard

In this interior, a girl with a blouse the color of summer sits in front of a window. Behind her, a curtain falls, a shower of light, and behind that, the tropical foliage of Le Cannet. Outside my window in Virginia, it's a day still trying to make up its mind—dregs of snow in the corners, daffodils ringing bravely in the cold wind. Spring is late this year, the grass undecided if it should take a pass, stay sleeping, rolled up in its patchy old coat. But there are two blue jays at the feeding table, and they aren't fooled by the bare trees, the blossoms reluctant to unfold. They know the sun by its angle, see that the stars have gathered in their spring flocks. They are bluer
 than the sky,
and they know it. Every day, there's another cup of sunlight. They tilt back their heads, and they drink it all in.