Notre-Dame
Paris

She was sitting one row in front, to my right, oddly angular in a bright red dress.

In that ornate half-dark, stained shards of lucent rose, azure, emerald, gold,
melted down through the air and over the heads and tiles like angels’ blood.

She was weeping silently, eyes fixed on the altar; not crying, weeping, that slower, fuller grief as river is to rain. And rivulets were coursing down through her thick and careful make-up so the close-shaved stubble showed like tiny wounds. Or splinters of wood.

One way to bear your cross. If the soul descends from truth, it is male and female, turn and turn about, with all its disguises and dishevelments so lightly worn it is the world you had before your face was born.
She blew her nose and stood with us and sang:

the organ notes, and colours streaming down were throw-backs to the muted light,

paths diverging to rejoin. I followed him out to say Très chic, Madame (while meaning ‘brave’) but lost her in the crowd and sat down on the low brick wall

fifteen metres from the portico by a crisp little hedge just in front

of a cobble-stone carved MARGUERITE. I’ve no idea why or who. For whom.