

BLACK ON BLACK

In Cracow, the old Jewish town
is manicured for tourists, with

Yiddish cafe signs, posters for
Schindler's List sights. There are few

tourists, but in an empty, white-
washed synagogue an endless tape

plays a black and white movie (German
footage) of the move into Kazimierz

ghetto in early '42:
poor people pushing wheelbarrows,

a well-dressed man in a horse-drawn
carriage, trunks piled high, a cart

carrying what looks to be a whole
hut, the driver, smiling, tipping

his hat to the German officers
(who are in the film, smiling too),

streaming crowds, crowds alive, children
watching an endless stream of

furniture crammed into a house. And I
think of the vineyard in Bonnieux:

on a newly carved out terrace,
along the stone wall the white shells

lie in clumps, some sunk into
the earth, some piled into small hills,

a mausoleum to themselves.
I imagine the snails alive,

moving to succor, moving, at
their own pace, to the last wetness

after a dry spell. Or so one could

try to explain, oh so one wants

to understand, those traces of life
still, or moving, white on white,
black on white.