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## Von Portheim

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## VON PORTHEIM

The iris that were arranged in the baby's breath  
are in the compost. The inconspicuous talents  
we have: arranging bouquets, recognizing rock & roll tunes,  
remembering birthdays.

If we were flowers perhaps the sticky yellow dots clinging  
to our stamens, maybe  
the rigid air we rest our stems against as we lean into  
living rooms, would be marvels.

We are concerned with our desires. One after another intense  
blue flame burns us up. We don't admire the modest  
gifts as we do the fire red poppies absolutely red  
in a field in Greece. We are like Henry James as he wrote  
from Europe — how much more the States mean now.

The same I suppose with our own blood. Seeing  
my Viennese father at 67 sitting under the wisteria,  
here, in California I am ready to listen to our long list  
of minor royalty, as the ebony bees fly up.