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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.