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## The Flower Cutters

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## The Flower Cutters

1.

A teen in time of war dances closer during slow songs.  
He grows his hair . . . roams the lane of brothels,

where whores dye garments black in kettles  
for funerals of student brothers buried at morning.

And these people pass the firewater jug, door  
to shanty door. Their children gnaw at sugar cane plugs.

This strip, *La Avenida*, is on a hillcrest.  
Stars blister above. For these stargazers

the stars are clear, are payment, given that here  
porch lights forgive and burn red.

2.

All weekend: morning funerals and afternoon weddings.  
The folks wear black satin then white voile.

Peasants make good business cutting flowers  
on volcano Izalco. The bundled gladioli on their backs

like quivers of arrows for some afterbattle,

where the dead are ushered into the windowed parlor  
of the family album.

During noon naps the boys take flowers off graves,  
alter the sunburst symmetry of the coronals,

sell the same flowers to the groom's mother.

Honeymoon is in the parent's house. After muted  
consummation, she educates his heart in the math of love.

She sleeps, her locks scribble on the pillow.

He reads and learns and folds away.

3.

San Salvador is dead asleep.

So take notice of what it is that happens:

How in the processions sunflowers stop tracking the sun  
to follow the silver trains of brides.

How the streetsmart drinks an egg for hangover.

How the couple, not in love, unravels in the morning,

swab their crotches . . . dress.

How they execute the sign of the cross,

march out through flitting grasshoppers.