

Torero
Glenna Holloway
1028 Apple Lane
Lombard, Ill. 60148

Nostrils and eyes streaming grit, Santos sculpted
The short cape, made it vault, caress, made it flow.
~~Raw blade~~
~~Raw blade~~ signs shredded off arena walls. Santos
Defied the blowing, the brass song in his brain.
Perfect parones, spinning. People-thunder. Pase de pecho.
~~Perfect~~ Bull dancer and Minotaur and Greek tapestries.
Time raced, stumbled, coiled. Santos sighted down his sword.

A bull to take recibiendo—the ultimate tribute and risk—
Waiting like a figurine, committed to that stand, waiting
For the deified charge to sink the espada,
Holding down the triangle head with serge on a stick,
Leading it past his sledging chest, trying to remember
The kill would be for Miguel.
The cloth swung forward, beckoned.
The bull came. Santos leaned in over the horn with a name cry,
Rescued his lungs by a sequin's breadth.
A flawless execution except
Steel and bone collided. The blade bowed and sprang
Out of its hot sheath, out of crazed thunder.

Santos refused to heed his wrist, advice to descabello,
Retrieved his sword, cursing.
The centrifuge screamed and silenced unheard; the air churned
Rabioso. He made himself calm in his bowl of sweat and whiplash chill.
"We will have total perfection, eh, Diablo?"
A bugle in his head, an aviso.