

Let no ears or tail be taken from this bull.  
 If the other ubiquitous beast wished to bestow trophies,  
 nothing less than a trident of horns  
 and the point of his maleness would do. Once more  
 Santos heard his name as the bull smeared by,  
 redding his spangles, honing his senses on horn,  
 the memory of it stored in his scars.  
 Certain as stench and bone-rattling sideswipe,  
 he heard it--the voice of another avenger.

Through his years of bulls only Santos spoke,  
 his fluent muleta commanding the charges, punishing  
 the pale-hearted, persuading the worthy ones  
 of their chances to plunge their eagerness,  
 telling them at length to bow their heads  
 for the offering, the ritual communion.  
Veronicas ago Santos would have laughed  
 or called it a prank of weariness or wind.  
 Did Miguel's bull announce his name aloud?

Santos spat dust from his mouth. He must not succumb  
 to overawe. This was el toro de bandera  
 every true bullfighter hoped for-- measuring the man,  
 rationing his rage, keeping his courage and form  
 to the end. The matador could do no less.  
 Nostrils and eyes streaming grit, he sculpted  
 the short cape, made it vault, caress, made it flow.  
 Ads and signs tore off the walls; Santos defied  
 the blowing, moved to the brass song in his brain.  
 Perfect parones, spinning, people thunder, levitating.  
Pase de pecho. Perfect.  
 Bull dancer and minotaur.  
 Time reverted then raced back. 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 dint of 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.