

Santos did not hear hoofs pulverizing sand,
 sounds of the watered cape, the olés. His first bull
 was a mountain, an armed freight train, bold and honest
 blood-mate to Miguel's damaged and devious one.
 Santos heard only wind instruments deciding his dance,
 humming his mind like wires, then the racking force
 of his will arcing the ring, entering the pic,
 bracing it against the picador's old sin
 of twisting and stealing the best of his bull.

A trilling time jam, a man unhorsed,
 and finally the God-lonely bugle
 retiring the picadors, trailing the man/animal cry
 of all who live awhile in the center of the centrifuge.

Santos placed his own banderillas, planted them close,
 claimed only shallow blood and hide enough to hold.
 He watched the adorned idol carved from legend,
 raised from a Minoan frieze, watched him size the arena,
 yellow bouquets bobbing against his blackness.
 Saw his talent without latent flaws,
 already certain this bull would not covet the quarter
 where he quenched his horn in a picador's horse.
 Saw him suddenly a handsome pander, parading,
 saw himself the same, the two of them
 in irresistible collusion, peddlers
 of a nebulous puzzle, together a dark matching piece
 for the niche behind the ferret eyes.

Santos took the sword and muleta for the last act,
 the faena. Wind snatched aside the cardinal cloth.
 But this toro chose greatness. Waited. Shared.
 Santos designed a new pass:
 Slow ballet of cerise wing and silver pivot,
 a celebration-- black mass of muscle, turning, winding wide
 to spare his partner's spine. The pimping wind bared him
 again, boring into a brief shimmering hate for Miguel
 and his curving tricks to crimp his bulls' backs.
 The pase de la muerte fed the rising circle of fever,
 flared the ferret eyes. The wind gasped,
 held its breath, puffed away thought, gusted
 between passes, reeled across the circle gone hoarse.