

MY SISTER'S CURTAINS

Bea Opengart

Orchids, mauve and white,
splayed across red cotton.
Bluebells are fat
tongues lolling
from their stalks.
There are no insects
in the garden. Instead
the daisies, their spindly
petals curling downward,
like spiders set
to scuttle the air for flies
that trap themselves, graze
one strand of a web as intricate
and inexplicable as love.

What I have felt of it
is more than I can say,
even now, how badly
we hurt ourselves
when no amount or kind
or constancy of love
will touch us. Having asked
what can be done, to whom
do we look for an answer?
I answer only for myself,
your hopelessness
my own loss of hope.

Someone has taken odor
from the hyacinths, left
the hollyhocks without leaves
or stems. The flowers

have been simplified, perfect
echos of themselves.
Carnations open fully,
a perfect bouquet: pink
for your hand held steady,
red for the blade
at your wrists. White
for the days
beside the bed, your fingers
closing over mine, the curtains
all I knew of flowers.