

FLIES

The flower in the green bottle
has wilted behind my back.
With retsina I celebrate
another man's birthday.
Why not? Shouldn't the dead
honor each other, and didn't he
help, that last time
in Saronis, and
didn't you help in Saronis?

IN THE AMERICAN EXPRESS LINE

Chrysanthemums in her crimson hair,
scattered, baiting, waiting
for the fool's dark hands
to rearrange her life. She claimed
to be the kind of innocent
I could get to know in stages.

She had been to Istanbul,
had known the seedy breath
of genuflecting Turks, the producer
in Crete who imagined her a boy.
How could I refuse? American Express
checks flocked to her willow body,
paper pressed against a fence
on a frumpy day.

Her boy friend, a nasal drip, touched
my arm, marched her off.
Something he offered made her laugh.
Later I found my wife, browsing
in fields of one drachma postcards.
I touched her hip. The day fired.