

was the final obscenity, and the old man got down
beside me and I heard his heavy breathing and thought
that now I too am old. It has been thirty years
since a death like this one, my friend
who was getting it all together. He too
was the hope of literature and the arts
and he left us on a Winter's day under a sky
grey like a disease—another one gone now
in the filthy snow and cracked ice on tarmac
leaving me with not the slightest idea of what
to say to widows and old fathers
and these women who appear out of nowhere, perfumed
and beyond consoling, sitting off to the side.

IN THE KITCHEN AFTER THE FUNERAL

*"Only by drinking of her
could he fly."*

—James Agee

John is just as they knew him. Eyes are laughing,
you can see, as he stands before a great banana tree
in the rain forest, and the hand holding the picture
is the hand of the girl whose hand belonged to John and now
is careful not to wet with her tears
this picture which is about all she has left. She shared
with him the Amazon river, a jungle and hammock
swung between trees, and this body of gold turning
to lead with its breasts gone suddenly cold.