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## A Death; Replacement Sunflowers

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*Angela Ball*

## A Death

At the beginning of summer,  
the violent season, your body's summer  
gives up to the lushness  
of a tumor your hand discovered  
apropos of nothing—like a note  
that turns up in a coat pocket  
the first cold day, an urgent matter  
you don't remember.

When you enter ignorance, die  
after fifty-three years, seven months,  
five days, when you die at noon  
in summer, the sun is featureless,  
full of itself. Nurses take lunches  
outside, a sharp smell of cut grass,  
an airplane chalking its flight—  
the first things to exist without you—  
your hearse travelling  
the narrowing highway to where you once lived, and past—  
maybe the nights sleepless with blossom,  
maybe the dazzling, transparent light.

*Angela Ball*

## Replacement Sunflowers

My yard: where a garden was—  
plum trees, apparently. The iron posts  
of a clothes line. One example  
of a blue pick-up.

Family memories: father sneezing  
heroically, one sneeze after the next.  
Mother tying flowers together like arrows.  
Sister walking pinned to one side  
by a water bucket, its drops following  
in archipelagoes. A tomb-shaped  
freezer's jerky, glimmering hum.

My childhood, the heyday of combing and brushing.  
Centered on dressing tables, combs and brushes  
carved from rosewood and ivory, very quiet.

The town has a coffee shop with hats  
that never leave their pegs.  
They can be seen together at night  
through gray windows—a strange  
suspension of movement, like someone falling.

A doctor listened to my heart: "Did you know  
you had a murmur?" Immediately it began murmuring  
questions I used to ask: How  
did the fire start? What's this river?  
What did the prostitute's daughter  
say to Uncle when he left for war?  
"Goodbye." She said "Good-bye."