



1973

## In the American Express Line

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## 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.