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A Rosary

George Barlow

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A Rosary . *George Barlow*

for Little Ray

his vatos — poised
four at a time
at each end of his coffin —
would bring him back
if they could
would cruise the barrio again
on big-ben afternoons
with him again would
pop their fingers
whistle up their soul
on zoot nights would
sing tiara over rivera walls
taste the rouge & nuzzle cholita feathers
would seize their mirrors combs dreams
tease & box would
puff up their magic
& wish these flowers away
would not hurt so bad
would change that night
would take it easy if they could
would stand now
unbandaged uncrushed manly
before the stunned calm
de la familia
would not hear the mass
the creaking pews the guitar
& lost boy vibrato in the song for him
would not be fourteen
tearfully born into this death
would bring him bring him bring him
glory be to the father
back if they could