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Cry in the Night

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Vicent Andrés Estellés

CRY IN THE NIGHT

Families mourning all night long.
The war and the years after. . . . I remember a mother
who was never told her son had died
on the Teruel front: she was told
“he’s missing in action.” And she waited for him
during the war. And she kept on waiting
once it was over. And she set the table
and she put fresh sheets on his bed;
she waited at the door. No news of him.
Did he die? Nobody knows. He is just missing.
She shut herself in her house. I remember
her crying out. The neighbors knocked at her door
but she would not open it. Where was her son?
If dead, where did he die? Oh, the facts of war!
Who can ever know? Families mourning
for the rest of their lives. The war and the years after. . . .

FLÈRIDA

Those of you who love take these ashes
—*Roís de Corella*

On certain nights, in the dark, the sad blind man
comes to the head of your bed and touches your body
with the trembling, numb hands of the blind,
as if trying to recognize an old delight.
You are silent, meanwhile, in the conjugal bed,
your eyes open in the dark, full of tears.
The hands insist, stiff, useless.
Some leftovers are on the modest table
in the dining room; the kids must be sleeping