Mementos

W. S. Merwin

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Mementos · W.S. Merwin

Sunflowers are brought to me on the morning of your death
in the clear day hands you did not see
a face unknown to you and never expected
accompany the stems through the gate
repeating an unfamiliar
name under a few high clouds

beyond the flowers there is still the sea
beyond the writing the waves go on overflowing
here is a long envelope
from which a picture of a black lake emerges
far away between my fingers while the trees are flying

a friend with a passion for freedom
said a piece of a poem and got it wrong
and put it in a letter to me
it was a passage by someone
of whom she knew I thought little
and she sent it
to surprise and remind me but she
misquoted it and wrote Even
the newt the worm the germ the first spit
sing the day in full cry

and how does it go now