

Town Names Like Orchids

Sooner or later men talk.
Town names color their conversations
like orchids in a vase.
Bloomington, where he met her.
Louisville, where he rented a room
and stripped the floors till she said she'd move in.
Names like hot cobblers: Peachum
where they slept the first time,
where he married her two months later.
Manchester, the restaurant by the water,
the night they walked to the trainyard.
Always a woman in some town,
always a room they love in.
Dark, where plants once grew,
where he gives her money
and they agree to meet at the lake next day.
So many men desperate for something
they are just about to get.

Bitch he yelled and pounded her door
till she asked him what he wanted
and calmed him down.
What do they want, these men women make seconds for
and ask if they're still hungry?
Sooner or later men stop.
When they talk
town names bloom and bloom
and the names of women
perfume their low voiced conversations.

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