

Two Odd People Picnic

You don't wish to speak? We spread
our bodies like paper on this pale
lawn. Another windy day! Your
sailor hat blows away while
I laugh, twirling a thick
dandelion. It's the job of firemen
to put out what I carry for you
like a third wallet, disease, thoughts
of you entering sleep like exotic
dollar bills. You
are preoccupied, lips pressed
like a tiny defiant accordian. Soon
you will speak prophetic thoughts,
murmuring "shooting stars, bad
blood." Your mouth curls, impressive
quarter of a moon. I'm drowning
in a sea of meadow flowers, stunned
by sun. You reach out
a hand, thanks, fishlips. The wind
is blowing away our sandwiches and
my gay facade. You're wearing
your southern charm like cologne
on a molting coat, bits and pieces falling.
We've been together too long
for me to impress you with lies
of perfumed men in Tangier. I smile
behind a veil of white bread, mayonnaise
a white star at the corner of my mouth.
You laugh like a gypsy, sound
of dimes hitting pavement.

—*Helen Valenta*