

Key West Cemetery

Under lonely festivals
of the blown-up moon,
staggering with its weightless space
in the ripe blackness
of the blooming night's perfume,
their strict bodies lie
between the frozen sheets
drawn, single, over stony beds,
tilted, reckless in their abandon,
pitched about in the old decay
of their common room,
where marbled cement secures in paint
the white repose, though mottled,
like a spotted innocence,
and fake flowers rattle
in their noisy rest,
the hot color drained
of any recent grief
in such dry display.

Such risky disciplines are the license
the dead may take, they say,
with all false pretenses shed
as we, too, wish, by name, a date's number,
or any other fact so remembered,
to be the final selves we seek
and like the dowdy angels
made of cheap concrete,
on tip toes, though crumbling,
lean in, a bit off center,
to weather the wearing circles
of the impending sun,
and, looking toward some inner dawn
with our tired interior eyes
when the seething night's advance is done,
we, above our stone-laden stations, rise
and, with a multitude of miracles,
from all disordered dormitories,
anonymous luminaries, moon-ward fly.

Kirby Congdon

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