

Gardenias

by John Cantey Knight

A smell of gardenias obliterated all else
as the walkway opened
upon subdued light.
Memories of childhood
stood
like marble statues of
the seasons,
their baroque, hardened flesh
glimpsed
through an emerald hedge of
manicured yews. Beneath the
encompassing ancient oak,
a white chair illuminated
the darkness.
He sensed her crinoline
body, spine straight,
devoid of softness,
heavily scented and
knew that she rested, or
rather waited
like the proverbial spider
on a fly, or a cat upon
the periphery of a path.
“So, you’ve returned
once again.” Already
through
the wrought iron gate,
he didn’t stop to wonder
why the gardenia smell
sickened,
or even now turning,
whether a bitter face
could ever comprehend
why he was running.