

When you were a maiden

by Rudy Thomas

& the southern seas
off Italy found my father
entrenched in rocky ground,

how the sun must have glimmered
off your face
& the warm beaches.

I was not even a thought
in his mind
when he saw you,

dancing,
in your ancient land,
the wild, gypsy dance.

He watched the organ grinder
send his monkey out
to beg for coins.

He fired his machine gun
at Germans
& a hawk with short wings

darted in & out
among the trees
& disappeared in the red of dawning.

He never forgot how beautiful you were
in that war-torn land
& how erotic your body was

for just an instant.