

# the HARLEQUIN

*Pippa Little*

**Ofrenda**

My altar is hungry for candles, my man's sweat for salt,  
wild honey, mezcal, fresh packs of cigarettes.  
I bring marigolds from the street stall  
not for grief but for their hot spite.  
Now I wait, open the window wide,  
summon desire. Moonless,  
it runs on its nerves, bloody  
as Santa Muerta's breath.

Lover, swallow up my life, I don't want  
to wake in the dawn chill to find you gone.  
Let's dance as the old ones do in the square,  
slowly, making do with forgiveness:

when morning comes I'll lick the sugar crusts soft  
like a street dog, throw your souring  
Manzanilla down my throat, I who am stuck here  
in a widow's body, you who are on long vacation  
from your life: this ofrenda is our bed,  
kiss me as I inhale you and our musk melts  
into a residue I could live on for ever.

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