

Memorial to a comrade sister friend

It was not what it seemed
the memorial for the fallen comrade
who gave her best years to exile
and the movement. Theirs was
faint praise turning the bad to good, shame to pride.
Speaker after speaker chronicled
her life on the margins of responsibility
the aging poet ranted as in days gone by
one person even gave an election pitch
(at a funeral nogal).

Everyone remembered how they had fought
and no one spoke of why she died alone,
sick and poor in the public hospital.

The missing truth filled the hall
rained down on the phruza-faced men and women
hobbled by arthritis and fat and swollen ankles.
These old people once were leaders. Revolutionaries
now caught up in pomp and protocol, loyal subjects
pretending this was the dream they fought for
that they too are doing well
and no one is sick at all.

There is no peace as the shadow of who she was
darts and swirls behind the podium, runs screaming through the hall
her spirit hiding amongst the twenty-eight floral arrangements
on the stage.

She could have lived for six more months on those damn
flowers.

Myesha Jenkins

Atlanta Review Spring/ Summer 2018, p. 64