

that flaming brand ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾

the light was only ever a sword
was only ever a fire to take my skin
from me

the car wrapped around a pole at the
centre of the milky way

a history of violets ⁽¹⁹⁶⁵⁾

translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas

xi

The gladiolus is a spear, its edge loaded with carnations, a knife of carnations. It jumps through the window, kneels on the table; it's vagrant flame, burning up our papers, our dresses. Mother swears that a dead man has risen; she mentions her father and mother and starts to cry.

The pink gladiolus opened up in our house.

But scare it, tell it to go.

That crazy lily is going to kill us.

xv

The mushrooms are born in silence; some of them are born in silence, others with a brief shriek, a soft thunder. Some are white, others pink; that one is gray and looks like a dove, the statue of a dove; still others are gold or purple. Each one bears—and this is what's awful—the initials of the corpse it comes from. I do not dare to eat them; that most tender meat is our relative.

But, come afternoon the mushroom buyer arrives and starts picking. My mother gives him permission. He chooses like an eagle. This one white as sugar, a pink one, a gray one.

My mother does not realize that she is selling her race.

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At that hour, the tiny underground creatures were starting thier work (those ones that wear heavy coats and work to the rhythm