

Grandmother

She could walk no further
Than the garden gate,
Her black skirt dusting hot sand;
Where the yellow heat
Bent down to us as it spanned
— From a sunflower's face —
Her slowing bones that belied
Her agile eyes.

In their brightness quickened
Eighty years of life;
The wisdom of long widowhood;
The time of briskness;
The stride to the waterpump;
To the bales of cloth
She had wound and unwound like
Multi-coloured snails.

Her look hunted hardship:
That barbed-wire gaze
That had governed her five sons
Still ruled without words
From a filigree frame.
And the linen she wove
With a sun-shy hand still cools
And calms my face.

LOTTE KRAMER