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LOSS

I
In the end, Sonia's mother did the packing,
Of what little would fit in the basket.
Her mother warned her not to name him.
But Tomas he was, and she slipped a card between
the folds,
And kissed the flame on his cheek.
Was it shame in her mother's eyes?
Was it shame, or grief,
That made her burn the money later?

II
If a seizure looks like death,
Then Lucy watched her baby die a thousand times.
The eyes rolling to heaven,
The shaking,
Flaccid apathy after,
One upon another.
More drugs, more fits, more codes, until—
He was gone.

III
Tomas had always had that distant look,
Even as a child.
Why, Lucy wondered, touching her graying hair,
Could he not be a silly college student,
And spend a year in France?
When he said goodbye mother, tall and fit and
strong,
She hid the hope that he would never find the other,
And kissed the birthmark on his cheek farewell.

Author's note: This was inspired by observed and imagined bereavements by mothers across multiple continents, and a departure that may occur many years later in an attempt to heal one wound, but with the consequence of reopening another.

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