RED ROSES, 6:30 in the evening

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The first bull, Mexican matador, the overweight lancers on horseback pierce el toro’s spinal column deeply, over and over, taking his strength, his power, bringing him to his knees after two half hearted passes with the cape, just wanting to die—TORO TORO TORO TORO we scream,

enraged by this cowardice of lancers, simpering matador—MATALO we yell, KILL HIM, el

toro on his knees begging for death— an older man yells to the young, Mexican

matador, “Sin pasión te haces viejo... 
Without passion, you become old!”
We BOOOO the coward, his
dragging red cape, out
of the ring, the circle

where death came as
sword, metal, thrust, 
el toro suffering, bleeding,
families of the poor will

eat tonight, the best cuts for the 
rich. The second bull claims the 
ring, chasing junior bullfighters with 
fuchsia capes behind wooden

barricades, full of power, death
laughing at the tips of his twin 
horns- the smug lancers enter, 
lances poised to take his

power, we go wild
BOOOO  BOOOO
Only one superficial thrust, 
someone signals as we

BOOOOOOOOO
confused, they leave the 
circle as we stand to
cheer  TORO  TORO  TORO

The Spaniard strolls in with power 
and grace, his red cape held at hip
level, he faces el toro, an equal, respect
in his bearing, and they begin to
dance, and they begin to dance
an ancient dance of hunter/prey,
prey/hunter, death to death, and
in the last light, the great sun

showers light and shadow equally,
the circle where they dance, toro,
matador, death joins this graceful
dance of equals, twin

horns skimming the Spaniard’s
slim body, so intimately,
death is his lover, his
mother, those powerful twin

horns, and el toro
knows this, we can
see that he knows
this, as he gives himself

(his immense strength,
power) to the dance of
equals, each one could
die, yet each one dances

so gracefully, so intimately,
horn to hip, horn to groin,
sword in hand, sweeping
the red cape, human and

bull breathe the same
sky, feel the fading sun’s
light, shadow of moon,
equally, they dance
as we shout OLE
endlessly, they dance,
equals in death, in
love, they dance. The

Spaniard rises on his
tip-toes, every muscle
visible, tense, his suit
of lights sparkling at

6:30 in the evening, sword
drawn, ready, as his lover
passes so intimately, twin
horns caressing his thighs,

el toro passes beautifully, dancing,
death finds him dancing,
swift death, no suffering,
dancing—his lover’s tender

ear in his raised hand, he
circles the ring, holding it
tenderly, not a prize, tenderly,
someone throws him una bota de

vino, he gulps as the crowd
counts UNO DOS TRES
to twelve, he drinks at 6:30
in the evening, smiling,

shouting GRACIAS as the
moon swallows the circle,
as el toro is butchered for
hunger. I want to
dance with my death
gracefully, equally, at
6:30 in the evening, the
hour of my birth, as

Venus rises spilling her
erotic light, vowing to
meet the great Sun at
dawn, facing Moon and

shadow, I want to dance
with el toro, my lover, so
intimately, human, bull,
light, dark, life, death,

those twin horns, swiftly.
Next time I’ll bring red
roses for the circle, if
such a dance is danced-

or I will scatter them as
I walk, petal by petal by
blood-red-petal,
these roses

are to honor
light and shadow,
bull and human,
the dance, equally,

at 6:30
in the
evening, as
Venus rises
spilling her
erotic light
on us all
equally.

To the Spaniard, Antonio Gaspar-
San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
December 31, 2007

Alma Luz Villanueva