

Four Sonnets

I

Shall I imagine an infinite field
of strawberries for you, a rainbow sky
where pink cotton clouds and happy birds fly
overhead, where roses and carnations shield

your face from freezing winds and heavy rains?
Should I dare to think of mellow sunsets,
to dream of a still breeze whose flow begets
songs and giggles, a joy that never wanes?

Can I dream thus of joining you one day,
and hold your hands, and skip with you, and dance
and hear your girly voice, and once more play?

Yet this dream can't be true: there is no chance.
I fear we simply perish, pass away,
mortal creatures in a baffling expanse.

II

Let me forever sleep this peaceful sleep.
Let me forever see her hazel eyes,
hear her giggle, her shrill girly voice keep
with me, relish this memory, the prize

of a lifetime that has become too long.
Let me forever dream this pleasant dream,
and sense her presence, feel that I belong
with her, let myself go down this strange stream

that one day seems to take us all somewhere.
Death took her away from me far too soon.
Where to from here, I honestly don't care.

Just let me stay with her under this moon,
hold her in my arms, spin her in the air,
with my dear daughter in some timeless swoon.

III

Morning brings her the unspeakable pain,
the sorrow, the stab, the death wish, the dark.
Keeps her eyes shut, she'd rather be insane:
life's become a meaningless question mark.

Her ache, I do know, shall never grow mild.
The tear, the silence, all the friendless days.
All the things a mum would do with her child
became a delusion, a spurious haze.

Time's but a wait, a futile exercise.
Without her daughter, there'll only be males:
no girl-games, no dolls, no mother's advice,

no secrets, no questions, no ponytails.
Shedding tears on weekly cemetery drives;
a grief-clad outlook until she grows frail.

IV

Time past and time future collide in words.
Their present is forever an absence,
emptiness, a bleeding gash, a dream blurred
by grief, meaninglessness; there's no pretence.

Those words recur everyday in their minds:
'she would have' has now become commonplace;
they say 'She'd have' as time passes unkind,
they whisper the words while locked in embrace.

Here and there they all hang on to a lie:
they're expected to pull through, to regain
the selves they used to be, and not to cry.

Yet the self can't be fixed once it's been slain:
for their child's dead, and so the parents die
as well, crushed, torn apart, slaughtered by pain.

Jorge Salavert