

Flora at Kings X

Friday morning on the Victoria Line,
Among the careless and coldly lit passengers
Who looked only ahead, or at their books,
Flora entered, and sat with care.
Eased her backpack, which burst full of flowers
Against the seat, as if she were a dancer.
And lowered herself gently into the space.
Her small frame wholly encumbered with bright blooms.
Her backpack filled with the clenched fists of tight rosebuds.
Her carrier bags filled with striped and dappled tulips
Vivid Mauve, and Orange, and Red, and Yellow,
And lilies, Orange spotted Tiger lilies, with flecked tongues,
And her arms spread, strained wide, to hold the other bags,
Full of white flowers, of open faced Roses and tight Tulips,
Froth of Syringa, ivory, cream, and white on white.
And trophies and arms of green leaves,
With another bag of white lilies spilled at her feet.
Squeezed between two travellers,
Seeming unaware of the colour beside them,
Of the green tendrils,
And white buds trailing,
Tugging at their pale hands, and free papers.
She turned her flatly cropped haired head,
She was so careful,
So attentive of the pressure on her wet flowers.
This Flora in blue jeans and a hooded top,
Travelling north, perhaps to a wedding?
The carriage bloomed and filled as the flowers breathed,
Exhaled, sang of their cut shock, their arias,
Their cascades of sweet scent and colour
Fought the closed morning.

Ian Beck

