

Speaking to Garcia Lorca

Coming back after surgery, I meet
Federico, who is concerned that he
has chosen the wrong time for the start
of his famous poem.

No, I tell him, Five o'clock is perfect.
It is the hour of the bull fight, after all.

Not in Sevilla, he says. In the heat.
OK, I admit, but think of the *ritmo*,
the rhythm. *Cinco* scans better than *seis*.

He takes my arm to cross the street.
We are going to drink *fino* and discuss
the bulls of Miura, but then someone
calls me: *Mrs. Flaten? Mrs. Flaten?*
and I open my eyes.

Two nurses and my husband are looking
down from a great height. "You're ok,"
my husband reassures me. "It's all over."

But I know it's not. How can I tell him
this surgery is just the *paseillo*, the parade,
the music, a bright suit of lights.
How can I tell him that my first bull
hasn't even taken the ring.