

NIGEL HOLT

The Sixth Lion

Poppy-lick, the rivulet, sky-wet
and Kush-lipped, field-filed, red; redder yet
than lips sequestered by the blood of drug,
than joy caressed, than pinching fingers snug
around the bulb, tighter than regret.

Poppy-lick, the drip-drop, blue-thick, gray-sweat,
silver-sliver of a dream-state death threat.
Carry off your brothers in a jug;
splash them on the Panjshir graves you dug,
you dug—you thought you dug one bloody sunset.

Poppy-lick, the mistress, lover, kismet,
wallet-dry and purse-debt, Sufi pirouette,
remembrance of passion-past, smoke-fug,
deep-draught of red-bloat from sleeping fast, bedbug,
wake-thirst and never-sate, this morning-met:
Poppy.