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Altruism

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A. E. Stallings

Altruism

I scrounged the sunflowers off the street
After the market. They stood dumped
Beside the recycling, shabby, slumped,
And bound about their severed feet.

I dragged them home. I chopped their stalks,
I hissed some water in a vase,
And gaped into each seedy face
Inscrutable as handless clocks.

They flared a little with a force,
Exuberance dizzy off its meds,
But doomed still, cut off from the source,
A basket full of severed heads.

So cheap they were! They cheered the room,
Their razzmatazz of hope-in-doubt.
I held them hostage for their bloom
Till they were spent, and threw them out.