

Wedding Flower

Robert A. Rees

Her body was cold, nearly
frigid in the room
set aside for such matters.

He watched them thread
her arms and legs through
the sacred undergarment with its
embroidered symbols.

The robe, yellowing from disuse, was next,
followed by the apron, its green leaves
darkened around the edges,
and then the sash, slightly soiled,
which the sisters tied neatly at her waist
in a big bow.

After the viewing, when the sisters
had placed the cap on her head and
pulled the veil over her face, and everyone
had retreated to the chapel, he stood alone
looking at her face one last time.

Just before he closed the casket,
he took the flat black flower
he had found pressed in her Bible
these fifty years, and placed it
over her heart.