

HILTON HOLLINGSWORTH, III

Elegant name, don't you think?
There won't be room on the marble marker
for all there is to say. But it always ends
the same. Ritual metal box in a soft color,
half the lid open, overkill of carnations,
sibilant sounds, people comparing
how I was when they saw me last:
Teeing off at the club, working late
at the 13th district polls, driving
my custom-made fenders around the capital.

Today's gathering vies to establish
acceptable links-- men smiling over anecdotes,
women nodding between selected instances,
all coined for the slot of why they're here
within my wife's hearing.
They could always count on me, always a winner.
Even the way I dodged debts, shotgunned rules
and skewed facts becomes endearing today,
doesn't it? They know everything I did
was for them. So listen, stone carver,
standing quietly in the rear,
maybe you should just say on the marble:
"This is the very last place
the last Hilton Hollingsworth will lie."