

## City Flowers

---

*Martha Mattingly Payne*

Carrying flowers home from the grocery  
In a brown bag  
In New York City  
Is like a dream for me  
Who sits alone  
In a rectangular house  
In a sleepy Southern suburbia  
With a doctor for a husband  
And two retrievers  
For company.

Not that I don't love them, I do;  
They feel soft  
And lick my face  
When I hug their necks,  
But Kathleen Turner romances her cat Romeo  
And Sigourney Weaver fiddles on  
A violin, and each lives alone in  
A penthouse near Central Park where  
Always lie  
Flowers in a brown bag  
On a marble countertop.

Yet I have flowers too —  
Roses my husband sent me  
Last week,  
Six red ones he ordered  
To thank me for enduring a month of  
Spouseless nights and spoiled dinners.

Then why do I long  
To buy a bunch of cheap daisies  
In New York City  
And to carry them home  
In a brown bag?

Sigourney just tosses hers there on the counter  
By the self-frying eggs,  
And though Kathleen took hers sailing  
Down Madison Avenue,  
She dropped them along with Romeo  
When Michael kissed her.  
But I keep giving my roses preservative  
And clipping the stems diagonally  
Under water  
And hoping all the buds will open  
Before the necks lose tone.

As another velvet petal drops to the checkered tablecloth,  
I bend to stroke  
A golden-brown belly,  
And click on only to hear  
Oprah the thin  
Proclaim that women in the nineties  
Can have it all.  
Instead, I pluck a thorny stem  
And rock it to sleep  
Where I find peace in the perfume  
Of wild, golden daisies.