

Merry May
by Margaret Shaw

wafted by lilacs, i didn't know my former bridegroom
across the wedding lawn
we are beckoned to encircle
the bridal party, family style
in the warm afternoon sun
nestling them
shoulder to shoulder
we eyeball guests
around the circle
lacy beige ribbons
writhe in the breeze
cameras tattle like jackdaws
capturing familiar faces
squinting in the glare
my former shaggy husband
and his current wife
hard-mouthed
gather around
this unsuspecting couple
i sidestep along the edge
to frame the minister
between the bride and groom
this minister
reverently free-wheeling,
invites everyone to offer reflections,
to embrace
crinkled hankies emerge
however over bright
as we crush to hear

would be in attendance
for heaven's sake
i wish someone would tell me
these things in advance
i could steel myself
i could think of a reason
to send regrets
at the last minute
it's disconcerting enough
to run into them at a picnic grounds
but at a wedding
where idiotic promises
are mumbled by dolled up babies
and worse! where full-scale adults
condone this insipid idealism
it reduces us all to conspiracy.
directly across this wedding circle
the father of my children
graying and grinning in baggy pants
stretches to catch my eye
i twist to follow the couple's hands
fumbling pristine rings,
but cannot escape the stain
in my background
this vision
we smile on
the circle constricts
and dream the dream