

# DAHLIAS



## Autumn

They brought me a quilled, yellow dahlia,  
Opulent, flaunting.  
Round gold  
Flung out of apple green stalk.  
Rough, ripe gold  
Of maturity,  
Meticulously frilled and flaming,  
A fire-ball of proclamation:  
Fecundity decked in staring yellow  
For all the world to see.  
They brought a quilled, yellow dahlia,  
To me who am barren.  
Shall I send it to you,  
You who have taken with you  
All I once possessed?

~Amy Lowell

## A Dahlia

Hard-bosomed courtesan, magnificent  
Marble-glossed figure, eye opaque, of solid  
Brown, opening like a bull's languid and stolid.

Flower ornate and richly plump, no scent  
Wafts round you, and your body's graceful ease  
Rolls free – then mutes – its flawless harmonies.

Yours is not even flesh's scent, that those  
Hay-tossing belles exude, rather, you pose  
Idol unmoved by incense burned before you.

– Such is the Dahlia, king nobly costumed:  
You hold your head high, modest, unperfumed,  
Irksome, among the jasmines, who abhor you?

~Paul Verlaine (Norman R. Shapiro, translator)

