After Lorine Niedecker

Jen Daniels

The women leave the limo
clasping lilies, led
by the groomsmen, one grasps
the maid of honor’s gilded
arm like a glass stem. Aren’t

lilies funeral flowers? Good lord,
look at the rock
on her finger. He’s loaded,
right? Is there a rule about brides
over thirty-five and white? She’s

not a shoe, this isn’t Labor
Day, what should she wear? green?
Lily-pad or cartoon
frog, glistening? Not gossamer,
of course, but what? tulle,

taffeta? sateen? the color
of fertility, a totem
like the cornstalk
fence around the reception
hall. That gown isn’t

white, it’s cornsilk or candlelight.
The groom—how much older
is he than her? than she?
Please, he’s not quite
old enough to be her father
may he rest in peace—
and the bride’s mother mug
for the camera, her fist
against his jaw: “hurt my baby,”
she says, “and
I’m not kidding you you’re dead”