

“quickly your sluggish hands gather...”

*quickly your sluggish hands gather the black flowers
the black flowers of Hades, the icy and viscid flowers of frost,
your sluggish hands edged onward by shadows
and by a final silence -- drawn dreadfully back*

*falling on flaked Elysian meadows, the red lily
on the slushy & over-run meadows of fog
where the lily melts away quicker, quicker than the smile
your redly fevered lips had lost*

*your reluctant body glimmers in the wind
between the ringing of glasses, a solitary star
your dark and dull steps no more heavily lingering
than the faint draft of a flower in the air*

--Mario Luzi

translated by Jeff Gburek