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Parade

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Parade

Lorna Van Gilst

Six lean-armed boys, eager as parrots,
Chirp their plans to one another,
Wrap fronds of palm
 around a lopped-off pole
 lying angled in the street
tie on some purple flowers
measure the flag—a monstrous
 band of red and white

then stop a long-boned woman in the street—
 —rare chance to practice English—

*“Come see tonight—parada—
El Día de Independencia
una parada—”*

“What time?” I ask—a *gringa* question.

“Six,” they say . . . *si* . . . six . . . or seven . . . or eight—

They raise their pole
strike up a tinny band
of beating sticks and lids of pans
a rusty trumpet
slide trombone . . .

Rehearsal on
El Día de Independencia