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Flower Crowns (Third Prize, Peter Sears Prize in Poetry)

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Flower Crowns

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Children playing in the fields weave crowns
of daisies with paper thin petals and centers like suns
and they adorn innocence with small marvels.

The older children string together chains of receipts
the confetti of advancement weighing on work-laden tendons
and the chains get longer with every bill and tax –
strangled tired body with rows of subtracted numbers.

So I purchase factory-made fake flowers from the craft store
using grimy coins scrounged from couch cushions and tip jars,
and I make that chain a little longer to adorn a weary head
with what won't die in so short a time.