

SUNFLOWER HOUSE

(Van Gogh & Gauguin in Arles)

Ann K. Schwader

The hopeful color of an unripe sun,
it blossomed nine weeks' wonder in the South
of France—then turned, like absinthe in the mouth,
to bitterness & madness. Well begun
soon wears away when chaos roils the stars
two choose for navigation toward one goal:
mere pigments cannot ease a shattered soul,
nor heal an outlaw of his legend's scars.

One took a train for Paris, & one shut
himself in St.-Remy until the night
sunflowered into novae in his mind.
Years later, broke in Paradise, & cut
loose from both health & love, the outlaw's light
falls gentlest on petals left behind.

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