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In a Crowd / In a Courtyard

Mark A. Folse

In a crowd, in a courtyard
backstopped by jasmine,
blessed be the mixed scents
of flower & the queenly perfumes
southern women favor.

I realize I can no longer name
the most popular scents;
too long off the market,
too long in the deep north,
too long in lockdown.

I must reacquaint my senses,
as I did my skin going from
April snow to August thunder,
and push my bashful self
to ask a woman, “That’s
a lovely scent. What
is it called?” and be
thought an old Hank
when I have no ill
or other intention than

to recover entire
the self that left
New Orleans, New Year’s
Eve in ‘86 & became,
for a long time, someone else.