Tracks and islands of skin
fossilized Mertle's face.

Thin as a wrinkled pouch,
Helen feared to eat an olive
lest people think her pregnant
or experiencing a virgin birth.

Walt, a brief old man,
a Texan who seemed to be
made in Japan,
had a nose that resembled
a Volkswagen.

With hair parted in the
shape of a horseshoe and
boots pointed like arrowheads,
Walt often stalked, trapped and
murdered cockroaches in corners.

Harry, a clean old man whose
teeth must have been cooked
in curry, taught at Rice
where he collected retired
books and crusaded against
euphemisms. "They call us,"
he told me, "senior citizens,
golden agers, senior saints,
silver threads. They never
call us what we really are:
'old ----- blank'."
The censored word rhymes with 'parts'.'"

When I escorted to the polls that unique
mosaic of human antique,
they dangled on me like Christmas
tree ornaments.
Gladys, who in her day indulged and bulged, crawled before us turtle-like.
Supporting the sculptured hairdo of a rodeo queen, she chattered in a proper French style cascading her words through the nose:

"Mother died in San Francisco when the earth did the polka."

Suhail Hanna