

TLC poem: by Leo Boix

Portrait of my Grandfather With Scissors

After Homero Aridjis

Behind the counter in a shop in Buenos Aires
he unrolled fabric rolls, cut the silks, carried

boxes of pearl buttons for women in frocks
asking for bargains, some *gangas*, new stock.

He once owned his own shop, a haberdashery
that went bust under Juan Perón's menagerie.

Later was hired as a junior shop assistant,
brought with him his prized pair of scissors,

charmed lady clients with stories, cracked
jokes, read borrowed books on his way back

to his crammed house in Quilmes, escaped
to distant places: worldly Paris, ancient Egypt,

the Georgia plantations during the Civil War,
Roman London, the conquest of San Salvador,

dreamt of glowing citadels in the Orient,
musketeers' escapades, deadly moats of Kent,

seated among sleepy workers, *trabajadores*
returning to their bored wives, their chores.