

**when daffodils bloom**

*for Sam*

it was in the springtime  
of your life when the daffodils  
began to bloom, in between  
rail-road slats, the bathtub drain,  
the lining of the sky,  
the window's bashful face as you  
looked to Burlington's distant  
mountains and thought to yourself:  
what a beautiful day today.

death holds us close but soft  
and elusive, like birds, waiting  
for the sun to close its eye  
to fly away without hurting  
their friends. how lonely it is  
to watch you leave for warmer  
climates. you, who will never  
again feel the hope of waiting for  
April's first sigh.

## still

In the mirror before the party I spend my days  
renaming the frame of my face, making  
small throat sounds with my vowels and teeth

keeping my mouth open just long enough to  
scream my eyebrows back into a better place  
I have been told: I am more beautiful when I am scared.

Back before I let you run your fingers along the edges  
before you pressed my chin open so  
you could spit inside

I once thought my mouth was capable  
of doing beautiful things;  
rotten gum cavities and all  
I could sing and laugh and kiss and cry,

I could smile in the dreary April sun and make it stay  
or my eyes, even, once were green  
and my cheeks were soft in an unfamiliar firm hand.

In the mirror before the party I count the days  
it has been: two thousand, five hundred and fifty five  
and I am still a dyke with a poor tolerance for touch.

I close my mouth in the hum  
of the weeping bathroom light  
and disappear completely

the sound of my teeth  
rattling together like nervous horses  
is the only thing left behind.

**what the sidewalk sees**

you blow smoke in my  
mouth, on the curb of the road  
the street lamp goes cold

my mom used to say:  
real love looks you in the eyes.  
the moon is too bright.

so what? said the snail.  
will you walk me home tonight?  
will it rain again?

in the window pane  
recall how it used to be.  
recall the sunrise.

the dark of my room:  
you blow out the candlelight,  
I die like a moth.