

the first rain

on the 2100-block of Pine Street, Philadelphia

[*Early Morning Light:*]

the first rain
since the murder
slowly stains the sleepless
townhouses
without a sound—
dark needles
thread through
pale fog,
cold—
layered tiers
of flowers and letters
mounting against
the wrought-iron railing
above the concrete stairs
make a sidewalk shrine
where they found her—
I couldn't sleep—
all the blue and black words
in damp poems streak—
and more than parents
and friends write them:
so many women
and men
in random streams
light candles
at the site
and stand there
sheltering the flames
from atomized rain,
their faces burn
deep in their prayers—
cars pause
but must go on....
She was so young (*to be gone*),

promising (*utterly done*),
but was found half naked—
it hurt so much more,
spreading through
everyone (*as one*)
like a broadcast stain—