

Iris in fragments

1.
the body at the bottom of the stairs
is bruised blue-black from tumbling down
amazingly without any broken bones,
almost naked in its puddle,
its heart a nightmare's gong
with no regular rhythm coming
under my cold hand
and, incongruously,
I think she could be me
before I snap
out of it
racing for the 911 number
in numb hands
desperate before
the pre-dawn gray
blues her skin
and sinks deeper
than blood
into me.

*—but already
it is snowing
in my dream
where february's sky
half-cloaks the cityscape—
I lean across
the lines of her
limbs like saplings
under snow, the
frail field where
her eyes flicker
afraid if I
breathe too hard
they'll blow out—*

2.
thirty hours later
the haunted body
a deeper hue
of olive between
sheets she wears

grief-stricken, yet she
can't feel what she's done
(aside from a month's worth of tranqs)
to herself, to me, and everyone
but the word "selfish"
simply misses her...

she'd started loathing them
when her dancing made more
per hour than a real job all week—
it seemed so stupid.

"One guy offered me ten grand to do him,
said he'd *even* marry me..."

"Wow" (I can't help being impressed), "Marry for *how long?*"

"I dunno. Fuckin' *moron*..."

Hey, ya know, I can't remember
the last time we played a game..."

"Ya mean like, Go Fish?"

"Yeah," she smiles faintly.

*when the lights
black out as ice
downs the lines
(the violence of power
is also when it fails),
and amputates the voice
on the—
only the old sofa's smell
guides me across the room
back to the body
I somehow believe
should glow, but
there's only a window
and beyond the distant buildings
the dusk glimmers,
a white-blue lake—*