

Milk of the Sky

since then, you wake up in panic
from intermittent grey nights,
fists closed tight, a heart
in each one, you look
at yourself no longer knowing
who is there, what you've deserted

a life, your own life
never lived in

before is heavy with after,
the milk of the sky, light blue
milk of dawn with pale
suspensions of vapour,
has distilled from the sheets
to exhale a clarity with
no creases, no omens
it seems, a solid expanse
at the mercy only of the hours,
a blue day, so blue!

not troubled by its future
yet, that impeccable sky
that couldn't care less,
saturated freshness, heedless
of what awaited it, awaited
us all, in the altered peace
of summer's end, this milk
to drink, teeth clenched

nothing left but routed
appearances, semblances
of places, reality settles
over there so close, between fire
and dust, it's in your eyes
your mouth, dry rain lying
underfoot, nothing holds
within the skin when you've seen
what you've seen, when you know,
truths of spilled cups,
of ocean emptied, brutal breach

Tattooed

garbage collectors trample
vigorous at the bottom
of the building the sharp
shadows of the morning

the jarring of the truck's jaws,
more effective than the beeps
of the alarm, its limpid
drops, drags him out of bed
where he would gladly let
his new tattoo throb, ahrr!
crushing and swallowing,
noisy stops and starts
toward the chilly sunshine
at the end of the street

smashed bottles, bags
ripped open in the hopper,
other workers have braided
earlier in a corridor of night
the glow of the streetlights

he rolled over onto his raw
wound, stiffened on the edge
of a nightmare, jewel
under the gauze compress
oozing pink, neither death
sentence nor adoring reminder

he would have liked his tattoo
in the small of his back like
a girl, he chose between chest
and biceps the tender flesh
above a nipple, to expose it only
when undressed, no intertwined
words, no knives or commonplace
skull, instead an auburn head,
rapture under crossbones

out of spite, the ink wound
still smarting, tomorrow he'll say
a poet's bad luck charm

on his skin he took revenge
against a fickle woman
gone without explanation,
too arresting to stay around,
annoyed at being abbreviated
when all else failed, at living
a different story from his

raging, hadn't he plunged
into her for good? he believed
in the tattoo artist's burning
stings, smug self-punishment,
quiet killing of the killjoy,
aloof in fables of her own
invention, headwind lover

before the first coffee,
dishevelled disorder mouth
pasty, he swallows his pride,
cellphone to his ear

make her smile, caught off guard?

on TV a tracer dart blazes
red, fiery burst against a facade,
violent orgy of red, of scorching
yellow swells through black
clouds, the employees caught
between gashed walls are thrown
into embraces with passengers
on fire, hit by bombshells,
fusing of torn bodies, whirlwinds
in the furnace of screaming flesh,
what the fuck? . . . oh please
die instantly . . . without suffering!
oh fuck . . . what's he saying?

one hand on his chest,
he opens his lips slightly
on an abyss, can no longer
swear, tongue left hanging,
what's he touching there?
the wet dressing surprises him,
shame of the evil spell cast

under his palm, he can't feel himself,
his memory starts again from zero,
he is so, yes, so in love

so what if that mixed-up woman
left him, amid disappointed silences,
reservations harsher than insults

he loves that she's alive