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.

deaht 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
climes. 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.