

DANUSHA LAMÉRIS

## Detour

They are kissing in the middle of the street,  
cars passing on either side, the moon  
peering over the pale blossoms of the plum,  
as the man bends down, opens her mouth,  
her body, with the deft instrument  
of his tongue. She presses her fingernails  
into his arm. He tears the scarf from her throat.  
They are sparring. No, they are dancing.  
Impossible to say. She has lifted off her shirt,  
dropped it on the pavement. He has bitten  
off her earring, the small, black beads  
breaking free inside his mouth. Behind a fence,  
a dog barks. A radio proffers its grainy gift of song.  
He slides a thumb along her ribcage, grazing,  
just barely, the under-crescent of her breast.  
They are honeyed, bee-stung, drunk. Dizzy  
from climbing the winding stairs of the body  
all the way to the bell tower. His tongue  
is the clapper of the bell and she is ringing it.  
The sound she makes—those high, ascending breaths—  
is the bell reverberating through their bodies.  
A bell that should have rung *alarm* a while ago.  
But didn't. So now they're here, breath  
rising like steam, like smoke, already vanishing  
in the air. Their hands inside each other's coats,  
in each other's hair. It's late. Anyone could  
see them standing on the yellow line, undone,  
their faces lit by each car's temporary fire.