

Lilac

sometimes
the last one to check my IV at night
forgets to shut the window
so that in the morning
before the first one comes
to feed and bathe me
the scent of lilac lays about my bed

in that moment
(who knows the duration of a moment?
my hope is for hours, though days would be better)
i am again a boy and
the lilac i smell is the pale lavender one
at the corner of the church

before i can remember otherwise
it is may and i recall erin,
whom i knew not well
but only as the girl sitting under the K-k
of the alphabet border and
who ran in a yellow dress
on the asphalt behind our school
playing red rover
laughing bright as sparks from a stirred fire
with other children
not me
because, as my mother used to say,
she didn't know me from a hill of beans