

And then

the sting, a pinprick burn on the cheek,
heat spreading down chin neck chest

finally toes which curled hard in rubber shoes.
And then I cupped it and listened

to it buzz and bump against the walls
of my palm. And then the opened hand

like the bursting bloom of a lotus, I,
watching the jagged and drunk flight

of my brief love into the shadowed
jungle of irises. And then memory of my lips

that night, and hers, but a name lost
in some sidewalk crack. And then the first and only,

the way firsts dream back to us. And then she ran,
heat in her absence, and the familiar

scorch lingering throughout the day,
my life. And then the flood of others—

lips tongues teeth loss
—each containing its own beautiful hurt.

And then the last—oh princess, come
rescue me, my lips await, and wake me from my sleep

so deep, a dream of endless fields, a forever
yawn of green, wishing the next and then and then

and then...