

The Kiss

The night you denied love we were poised
perilously outside embrace.
I longed to kiss your lips

but you had turned away. I took your clenched
young fingers, unfolded them
and kissed your palm

then closed your hand, leaving that kiss
to burn its constant warning:
'This is love.'

I have not sought this rogue remembrance
of frantic innocence, one kiss
from youth's cold hour.

It searches an old cicatrice long healed
by years. You faded in me
like a slow sunset.

I watch it bloom. It sears your stretched hand,
ignites, consumes you.
And I forgive your ashes.