

The Hotel Accident

Fright can be worth the chest-pounding,
the unlocking of a breath,
a sudden consciousness of the aftertaste
of rarely used chemicals.

We can be killed so many ways.
In a hurry we dart from between parked cars
forgetting there are no headlights
in Enghien-les-bains,
but only horns.

In this same hotel last week
a young Belgian woman missed only one step
and the handrail, it was enough.

It takes so little,
a piece of bone landing the wrong way.

And another story:
a friend of ours at home
with a very small rifle,
a single-shot twenty-two, a toy really,
probed it into his nose,
probably found the trigger
without straightening his elbow,
it was that small.

All of us understand
the proclivity of these things
not to lie in wait,
but like a misplaced name
or a parking spot near Invalides
to be sought out,
always in great expectation,
clear glass pearls,
tight knots between.