

## A IN BLACK

You could tell it was suicide when the black  
skirt stepped out of her closet.  
It fit her body like a slap.  
She would stop washing her hair; it darkened  
in clumps stuck on her skull.  
Black shoes, a black sweater—she looked  
more and more like a nun.

She knew black was the purest  
color, the absence of color, the warmest,  
not evil or frightening, but reliable.  
It helped her think.  
It helped her live on the edge  
of a razor, of a tenement roof,  
of a rough, beckoning sea.

Dressed like this she would face  
the death temptation for days,  
every second a prayer  
that it come soon, clean and quick,  
that she be worthy of it,  
that it be kind to her, Death's sister,  
Death's constant companion.