

PURPLE IRIS

To cool off summer, we picked up fans
on my grandfather's porch. Winter, as if we could
invent it with our stories,
my brother's breathless lies: icebergs
grinding holes in our meager boats. He said
it froze us, solid.
Penguins looked on, without sympathy
or amazement. We agreed: frozen so, we'd be
ice. We could see
right through each other.

I know that part's true. For now when we argue
I can sit here opposite you in the kitchen
and see right through your ice
to the yard, its shimmer of maple, the lingering
lunging crabapple, past that
to the violet bed, its web of heart-shaped leaves
flickering like a pool. Then one dark iris,
probably there by accident, high as radar
on its filament stem. I look
through you and see it
a rinse of light, a perennial startle
of invention and courtesy, and I forget
we are angry, forget we have done this
damage to ourselves.