

BLUE NUDE
after Matisse

It is finally that we have nothing to assume
of ourselves but shadow:
the one infallible proof
that we survive the light.

The buildings falling over
the trees and asphalt
convince me that there are places to go.
But I will wait.
And if I waited until the hour
just before the first light,
still, I think you would arrive;
and we would return
through the same streets of sketchy light
to the same room,
dawn throwing itself at the windows;
and against the same white wall
the long dark curves of your body
once again
would erase all doubt.
And here, if I wanted,
if I thought it would make you smile,
I would talk about the moon that night;
but we both know
it is the unseen side
that is fullest,
the black tree lying on the ground
that calls the birds in.

In the park, it is the shadow
of the fountain that assures me;
the black water rushing out, then back
over grass that is half grass, half shadow.
And the bench where I sit
waiting for you
is rooted in its own perfect nothingness
as a man thinking of death,
able to live fully by it.