

Blue Bottle · *Patricia Hampl*

The blue-black flare at the bottom  
of the red tulip. Inside,  
the sticks of sex are alert and wet.  
The eye of the penis  
and its first glistening drop.  
That's what happened  
last night—not night  
but the pink moment of dusk  
when every eye, even the sky's,  
sees clearly through the pastel motes  
of daylight  
into the navy steel of night.

Remember that cheap perfume  
they used to sell in the dime store  
next to the orange face powder?  
*Evening in Paris.*  
It came in a blue bottle  
with a silver cap shaped like a star.  
That's the blue I mean.  
I twirled off the star  
and smelled what was in there.  
Sex was in there.  
I drew that blue, bruised fragrance  
deep into my nostrils.  
I was at the cosmetic counter of T. G. Grant's,  
and my cousin had just explained  
that the man puts *his* on *hers*  
and "they have to line their breasts up too."  
I wasn't afraid, no matter  
how odd it was.  
I just pulled in that heavy blue smell.

Much later I was afraid,  
for many years I was afraid with you.  
But last night  
I looked at the small, sleepy  
eye in the intelligent stalk.  
The blue light was caught there.  
I recognized it.

You I recognized.  
I said, blunt as that eye and as innocent,  
*Your penis smells like the rest of you.*  
The star opened, the flesh opened.  
The night and the body  
which are blue bottles  
opened and opened.  
It was the first day of Spring,  
the tulips which had been aloof  
bent out of themselves,  
blue night was exposed.