

Tulips

I hear a mirror-sound that won't be ignored – 'two lips,'
yours as willing as mine

red blossom, caught
in the narrow-waisted vase

why am I always surprised when, to each other,
they speak their own language?

Snake-neck stems, winding
the air to raise the flower cup

how did you learn to kiss
like that? How did I?

Fields of them in gray Skagit light
the land woven with bright stripes

there must be a million muscles, more
nerves to orchestrate one long kiss

blousy-open, black anthers
hanging by sheer threads

when your lips travel the length of my skin
mine can do nothing but shape O! O!

In the rain I planted hundreds –
the bed full – apricot blushed with pink

because I want only to wake
feeling yours soft on my neck

the vaseful, careening from bud to ruin
here on the dresser, petals everywhere.