

## When the Music Stops

*Dry sorrow drinks our blood*

- Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 3.5.58

A valve clicks open somewhere / in your chest. I hear it with my ear / pressed up  
against your breasts. / There's a rushing noise / as we both sigh together and I know  
/ you'll need a blanket soon. It's good / to exhale while we wish / our hearts could  
beat / in sync. You were nearly finished / painting your toenails / the color of my  
eardrums. As the blood / pulses, you ask / in a vacant voice, as if from the other /  
room: *Can you hear it?* Say: *My blood / is yours.* Ask: *Would it burn / you alive if my veins*  
*/ let it out?* Say: *Razor / blade.* Ask: *If there's no scar, / can you still—?* / Say: *Against the*  
*grain.* / Ask: *Will it make any sound / as it runs?* Say: *Cauterize.* / Ask: *Are effusions*  
*normal?* / Say: *Platelet rich.* Ask: *Can you turn the volume / back up?* Say: *Cloven*  
*hemoglobin.* / Ask: *How much longer / now?* Say: *Streams now.* / *Now rivers.* Ask: */ Is this*  
*the sound / of an empty house?* / Say: Say: Say: