

LIZZIE HUTTON

Nocturne

—tells how after, still entangled, you roughly pressed
your lips against my wrist,
my eyes long adjusted to the dark

so that, and still uncome, I saw
that your fourth finger, raised there on
your arm propped by the pillow, shuddered also
in some love throe of its own, your body's

inside violence fading here
inside me too. Your thrown-back arm and face
lit violet by the outside's shadowed
snowlight.

It was then that I, uncome, remembered
from my childhood
those spring days when the front tree
burst softly like first snow with cherry blossoms

floating from their thread-thin stems. Unpickable,
their own brief being
being its own climax, each blinked newly, thinking
I've grown old the moment my partner blooms.

And I remembered from piano
my own fourth finger quaking,
clumsy and square-tipped
since coupled with the smallest finger,

and how at my lessons
that ring finger, betrayer,
always seemed the weakest and the hardest
to control. That trying not to try too hard

the piece's final fragments, how I took it up myself there
in the darkness where I'd always been: that final trill
that sounds an echo at/against
night's separations.