

DAN MURPHY
A Sleepy Song

The windows all close up and she softens
a sedative with her tongue, then her eyes
blink. When she blinks she gathers the scattered
flowers. She stops gathering baby's breath and
lets fall the fat heads of hydrangea still fresh
from the sprinkler's hissing spray.

It does its
work; it works its mellifluous song—tongue
to throat—the odd integers dissolve.
The birds' closed bodies hunch in the trees.
And it is pleasant. They will not fly away.
It is pleasant to lie on this purple space between
breaths, between sleep and the next brush
with fame through death. The space between evening
and night.

A thousand magazine
articles, asterisks of snow. Dead skin. The water
must be cold beyond the sun. The water must be
cold before mixing with blood. When does
what's taken in become our own?

Something
was lost outside, something left. The water
must be cold even in sleep's monochrome,
even with logic unfolding, the dress billowing
over the water, over the quilt mother made.
She is not floating on the water. She is not imagining.
She is several.