

GARTH GREENWELL

Consideration

After, in the little cramped stall in the dark
where we had spent those moments together—
unnaked, exposed—he didn't leave
at once, he held me there a while
on my knees still on the foul tiles breathing hard.

My hair where his hand gripped me was damp.
And then the grip loosened, becoming
after the violence I had loved
something not a caress exactly but gentler
than before, expressive of kindness maybe

or gratitude or finally just relief at having thrown
for a little while what had ridden him
onto that ground we shared. Then,
still gripping me with one hand, with the other
he reached up and twisted the long bulb back.

We looked at each other in the sudden flat light.
He was older than I had thought,
his skin was drawn, the striking gray eyes
looked at me a moment and then
shifted away. He leaned back, his hand light

on my neck now as I worked my own need,
as I pressed myself to him, neither free nor bound.