Deluge (or, Ophelia)

K. A. Jagai

The words for moisture sound
like what they are, which is to say
sluiced is the juiciest word
to describe both the summer storm
slicking the windshield and the blood
seeping unending from the wound within
my belly. Neruda said *sometimes I wake*
up and even my soul is wet and
you hated that didn't you. You
who haunts my every step, whose loss
is a ragged-edged hole in the back
of my skull, leaking wants and memories,
wherever I am a grisly trail. I leave
damp in my wake, tacky grief
drying in imprints like a cunt
or a stab wound deep inside
where not even lovers touch.
Where you touched, no lover could—
places that no longer exist anywhere
outside of my mind, but those too

are leaking into the world, staining
every word I speak to anyone who knew you
biblically, as blood, as passing strange,
as a bearded face on a stage.
I am trying to remember everything
you ever said—every foolish thought
and the time you vomited all over the yard,
and the first time we held each other, sharing
the same armchair in A's house like we did
it all the time, which as all intimacy begins,
became true. Twenty years
is most of my life, but soon it will be less,
and some day I will have known you less
than half, and nothing
makes me want to follow you off
a twenty third storey windowsill more than that.
How am I meant to go on living?
Every question is another cunt, more
life sluicing out of the wound to pool
upon this page. Death I know
with the intimacy of worship. Death goes
on and has no patience for sentiment.
Asks nothing. Says little. Holds
nothing but nothing in its hands.
You have chosen to go where I have

always longed. You have beaten me.
I run through the deluge, everything sluicing
over me, through me, from me.
These days, even my soul is wet.