The Iris and the Blade

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for Yukio Mishima

The body Japanese:

perfect as the words,
perfect as the death
    you posed for, exposed to arrows, snow;

    a saint:
    a temple burning insight, crematory;

words like paper lanterns set adrift on mirrored seas;
sound of waves and you and you and you—

seconded; multiplied; the constant man;
the woman and the mask;
the incarnations of yourself turned inside out
to show the cut;

    rough flower of the spleen inside
the bright kimono, opened;
    arranged;
    the iris with its blades turned out;

the incense of your death sweetens
    the skull; dulls defeat,
    the longing for a country.