

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.