

THE NAMES

KRISTJANA GUNNARS

do not tell me their names
their special hue, evanescent scent, brilliant
lighting up of the dusky grass,

the courtyard of your graphs and shapes,
lines explaining the distance from
balcony to balcony, the exact number of stairs,

the time it takes to remember just one
moment: to re-light an old candle, to
catch a glimpse of the sun against a window

pane: do not tell me the geometry
of a whole lifetime, now gone, now
remembered, beautiful, blood-spattered—

a rounded cupola roof, a clay-encrusted
building, a wrought-iron railing, black
as shadow, as tar, as forgetting itself

but they are roses, roses of all names
profuse and daring and overwhelmed
and the sky is white as a shroud