

## Bad Bells

Earlier, washing himself,  
 his hands lathered,  
 Rinsing, turning over  
 what she'd said about  
 His not wearing  
 that cologne again —

The smell was  
 “bad bells” — and now, next  
 To her, drifting, that phrase still  
 echoing out — as spring would,  
 He was sure, if all its greens, emerging,  
 sounded their various notes —

And calling up others — phrases,  
 scenes — parts of a narrative  
 Unending, unbegun. It happened, outside,  
 to *be* spring, and the forsythia's  
 Buttery wands were so vibrant  
 they hurt her, though she was past

Drifting, asleep, in love with  
 spring and the country  
 And tired of both. She'd had  
 a bad time, and he had, too,  
 And he was trying  
 to waken from his

When he turned then  
 and held her, firmly, gesture  
 As imperative — *Come with me* —  
 and her embracing him  
 As though whispering back, *Be still*,  
 and again, *Shh, be still*.