

## Catherine Strisik

### Paris In August

Where does my grief—not knowing  
it is grief—attempt to hide?

*Oh, so now I have your complete attention, says grief.*

The tenor sings at 6 am, an aphrodisiac's  
sorrowful opera. I am half asleep  
in my nightgown, mourning in the corner  
of temporary. In your arms, only my  
ear craves the city's cadent heart.

*Nevertheless, your body reeks of desire.*

May I hide in the boudoir?

Yes.

Bring me French-cut anything and  
a mirrored fitting room. All of me,  
perfect. Bring me the dress shop in The Marais  
whose sign reads, *Opera Gowns, Closed*.  
Bring me your soul on a wooden tray  
with an uncorked bottle of Beaujolais  
and no glasses to sip from. I guzzle and  
spill, and stain livid, neck and breast.  
I utter broken French.

*Name the body, won't you?*

Standing on the steps of the d'Orsay?

Do you hear Opera in August  
when only the hollowed hear? Our city  
in her abandoned beauty has everything  
to do with my unfinished pain, dull  
as grief and its inarticulation.