WILL DOWD

The Senator's Widow

To Midtown in Gershwin rain I went,
to her twelfth floor apartment—
the twelfth floor, it turned out—
to say thank you for the fellowship
bearing her husband's name.
She was pleased to meet me.
Her fingers were light as
caterpillars on my wrist.
The parlor, redly tenebrous
like a darkroom or submarine,
would have been breathtaking
had it not been airless.
She steered me around the room,
pausing beneath the Warhol
moon man, the Johns flag,
the metronome she found
tick-tocking in a closet shoebox.
There was a black-and-white photo
of her christening a naval ship,
the champagne bottle blurry
in her raised arm as she swung
for the freshly painted hull
of the U.S.S. Something.
Around and around we went
and with each revolution she poured
a glass of cognac from a crystal