

AFTER RUNNING IN THE DARK

HUGH MARTIN

—*The Stow Armory*

You watch the men with brown towels
tight on their waists walk

from the shower-room mist. O’Ryan steps
from the steam, dog-tags stuck

to his shaved chest. On the smooth slick
of his back: four deep scratches flare

from his lower spine
like contrails on the Akron sky.

He says nothing except *I didn’t sleep*,
pulls on his brown shirt

while you wonder how to make
someone touch you like that.

By seven you’re dressed in the desert-
camo shivering outside

the drill-floor garage
before formation, holding the cups

of shit-coffee. Flecks of snow
in the white dawn pelt your eyes

and you stand there waiting,
like always. Waiting.