

## Iris

Here's the one, the unbudded, single stalk, of which our first glimpse and instinct to grasp it are almost synchronized. We want right away to take hold of it between forefinger and thumb and wield it like the too-deeply green-dipped paintbrush it resembles. The wrist aches to hold and flex with it, a newly handled thing, to air-stroke a crescent *n*, a crescent *u*, a swirl, a figure-eight, and this playful act of no consequence is a privilege to anyone who beholds the iris, painter or no. Try a loose comma or a flowing S, a tadpole or upside down teardrop—yes! Like a conductor, you may gesture all this with your back to us: with a zip zap of your vert baton, the cellos and violins are off, heads furiously bowed like horses thrusting and high-strung, a race, not unlike the heart's, emoting in place, yet backdropped now with the vase that calls us to return its slender scroll of untold words — without orator still — still paintbrush, still to be differentiated as iris, until the head mouths and the flower speaks —and then what it says is still wholly unbelievable. The iris fumes purple, returned center stage, and stuns us with its opening petals: three purple-dressed women dipped back by their green-armed partners. It seems we have arrived at the end of some sensuous and resplendent dance! The end but as they say the fireworks: petals each midribbing with a yellow gold streak as though light were coming off a sword which turns invisibly deeper and deep into the sacred stalk and sends the fresh purple blood up brimming to the petal edges of the delicate.