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Intravenous

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INTRAVENOUS

—*Jalula, Iraq*

A rope of black smoke
above the city. Police sirens. The feet
of the crowd over pavement.
We don't know who she is: barely

a year alive, her blue leggings wet, stuck
to the skin with her own blood.
Doc Johnson holds her head
like an orange in his open hand. He kneels

beside the white Opel while Kenson aims
the mounted light from his M4
through the shattered window to her face,
the glass spread around her

like rock salt on the brown
seat cushions. Doc scissors her cotton sleeve,
pushes his thumb to her arm for a vein—nothing...
He finds one, eye to hairline, pulsing

with her screams; he wipes the skin
with antiseptic, and with one hand
steadies her head as an imam's voice
blankets the night in waves; cars filled

with wounded weave around us with the dust.
Doc lowers the needle to this girl's blue vein,
and it touches her skin like pricking
the Tigris on a smooth map of the earth.