



JEANNE MARIE BEAUMONT

AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED

for Joe Bolton 1961–1990

Twilight now and on a crooked deck, a boy-
man handles his scotch, the burn of its amber
entrapping what bugs him, what squirms then stops
squirming in the scrutinizing heat.

The ribbed glass presses wetly to his palm,
sweat of languor, of in-between, and he smokes
as a siren slices the traffic down
its middle, shoulders bulging to make way.

It's not hard to imagine a body
rocked on a stretcher, hearing fading out,
because he's long practiced, to imagine
the self all gone, or everything else —that

swift passage through the yielded corridor—
then cars merged back in lines and driven away.