Damaged Women

I.

They don’t make ’em like that anymore: sirens
going off in the background, drowned

violins ’round their neck – gonna make a sentimental
journey – stubby smokes stuck to lips, a perfect seam

about to burst. They stayed in rooms just long enough
to be missed when they left. The inevitable always happened
to them: a slow fall from the audience’s grace who
naturally didn’t want to witness the shriveling: the appetite

for delightfully solid flesh. Horses are in the picture
and the droning voice of someone believing we believe.

We all did. Then the ambulance again,
and the sirens.

II.

Matter of fact reports of her demise, scripted, deadpanned
into her tight blue skirt. I’m sure it’s blue. It must be blue. It matches

her eyes perfectly. Her pumps never scuff against anything
more than situations – a relative is involved, a crime

committed and he’s more concerned about the next six
months. He wants one more chance, one final legacy. He came

late to the picture, almost every day – a heart condition, later
revealed by the studio – believe me, it was a scandal.

Claudia Grinnell