## Thuran olds, The Board and the Living (New York: Knopf, 2000)

## The Death of Marilyn Monroe

The ambulance men touched her cold body, lifted it, heavy as iron, onto the stretcher, tried to close the mouth, closed the eyes, tied the arms to the sides, moved a caught strand of hair, as if it mattered, saw the shape of her breasts, flattened by gravity, under the sheet, carried her, as if it were she, down the steps.

These men were never the same. They went out afterwards, as they always did, for a drink or two, but they could not meet each other's eyes.

Their lives took
a turn—one had nightmares, strange
pains, impotence, depression. One did not
like his work, his wife looked
different, his kids. Even death
seemed different to him—a place where she
would be waiting,

and one found himself standing at night in the doorway to a room of sleep, listening to a woman breathing, just an ordinary woman breathing.