

Lecture with a French Exit

Like your room when a nap lasts
into evening, honey-light
from the street drifting
in the window, extreme sameness
turns to extreme otherness.
Being a bit of the earth
it will not acknowledge, you eat a fish
bone, an apple seed. Better yet,
take your gold ring—feel it
down your throat to ache
your stomach until you pass it.
And there it is: as if you had only
held it, feeling its weight
like breathing, before lowering it
into its plush box. A gulp
of time, you roll the air of the body
out of the body. And I come to you
with these other people, all lined up,
as if you were some spectacle
or figure of ridicule: laid out, your third
favorite suit, your own modestly
pillowed box. It is night,
or maybe almost; how easy
the body and its formaldehyde
maintain their illusory
you. The world made a prayer and after
all this, does it still exist? Yes,
this is the moment it chooses
to take you: when you have already
slipped out, here, smell the dry summer dirt.