

abeyance of nothingness

wisp across surface of the extant, birth
glow, stitching light from sunrise and sun-
set, soft rose caught in the unfolding penumbral
scroll, from before the beginning, into the fabric
of deep space, save for when that massive orb rolls,
mechanical and silent, across oblivion, swallowing
sky itself in its display, or a bumbling rush of
gnats just before dusk, late autumn, weaving their cursive
pheromone trails with frenetic insistence on the mind
of whenever might become, shine's abyss, or simply
the complexities of each moment crashing into
the complexities of the next, ever deep clatter, a roomful
of waiters mowed down by silencers, comedy of dishes
and trays, silver and glassware, *quelle surprise!*,
or flatly, as a table pitches into life, as love
might, into a day or whatever death forgot
as of light in its season, brief as a day, an hour

He who comes late to the place of his own singing

arrives nonetheless. Recognizes it (hopefully, which is a word I rarely use due to the assholes that surround me). Now we're cooking! (Two errors already and to error's divine!) Bring in a speckled trout whose only menu is a parable about two lions lost on a mountain when *along there comes this speckled trout*, etc. Comb beneath Michigan's clear blue skies, weave into basket of light that you might carry it home, flowers beyond anticipation, a child's fascination with small animals, death, and the slowly dying. Here lies a feather-like pain, intense but intricate, a hair burning your cheek as you're trying to read, impossible to brush it away what with mike, text, glasses and the audience at whatever state of attentiveness they bring to such things (that's three), a pain introducing itself to your oldest memories, fondest friends. My donkey needs a shave. There, that gets it. Surprise! You might not be able to remember who you were last night, yet you realize the coinage of the cost, each word's opening beneath end of silence, eye caught in sharp gleam of intention's noose, given a sentence to service for life. He who comes late, comes nonetheless, will never catch up, whatever that means, but that he might recognize such a presence, sounding depths of ocean's ear, that will animate each morning, as it draws its breath and slowly lifts its head.

Whammy

leaning in a window, on sill with elbows, head
into room, house of your life already gone out in
its living no doubt, hands ready to light a match, his
head is Nixon's, goober with weighted jowl, now
he's shuffling a deck, speaking with the casual air
of someone who's been there, i.e., before, has seen
things, or enough, fortune at his fingertips, he's ready,
. . . deals, pasteboards flipped to streams they themselves
create, riding slice of bright instant's way gliding, arcing, then
turning, banking and rotating into fate, but by then his hands
are animals speaking to one another, mouth to mouth, yucking it
up, he wants me to understand, but his face becomes the fame
of women, or two womanly forms, heads where were his
eyes had been (what difference between looking and seeing
and watching all the time and what might that mean to under-
stand?, lighted speech), shapes wandering darkness
of his being, warm, feminine, he is *from* the world, you
realize, leaning in, as emissary leans into something
already said in granite mind . . . but now he looks like
a gameshow host, ageless as toxins writhe just beneath
his face, being cast in fell design, yet he is all yours.

A young woodchopper's head.

And a lantern. A fat, young head. Healthy, male. Otherwise dead. On the table. Sweating in lantern's glow like Ol' Rock Face sweats, sailing deeper into summer's night while cicada go slowly silent. Maps, celestial charts, scientific books, binders filled with rigorous calculations and intricate tables that surround the lantern, laden the abyss as if to ask what question *is* of meaning, what significance beyond the attentions, directives we are given on such a night, with head. In constant constancy, we're sewn upon the waters of this world, what we would of it, what it will of us, having made us of its sum, and having brought us thus. An ape sits in the upper right waiting for his Gates of Hell portrait. By his torso's torque he seems civilly disposed, but in his glower clouds of sullen gather, darkening his low-slung brow like a broken tower. He is of another hour, and of a differently appointed time altogether, when the artist will be at ready, instead of mooning over a ruddy still life of no consequence, he thinks, while its heat burns his face.