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This Is How It Happens

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This is how it happens.

First the sun breaks
refracting where it touches
that small shrub, the interstices of this leaf,
dust on the surface of hair

scattering this world
entering the silence.

There are moments of placing hands on a table
and children entering the house.
There is the gap between the calling and answering of birds
there is fable, and there is
the thin distance of two old trees.

Then words.
Mumbling refrains
rising and falling in this same room
shuffling apart into meaning
and back again.

Then there are letters.
Wispy black strokes on fine crinkled airpaper.
Offerings of time and place.
Towards the end three poems come like letters.
Towards the end, like prayers.

This is how it happens, believe me.
This is the healing of the spirit.
Friends appear.
Thresholds are weighted with faces
straining oddly with newness

harsh almost, these faces,
branded with this first time
this untried reaching out of the hitherto.

Unpeeling habits we stutter
standing like this in the doorway.
Stammer against memory! Stammer against mist!

and I ask myself, why are they here?
knowing as I know the lack of what has gone before
when the emptiness was unfilled even with silence

but as I look at these faces
I see my own unknowing
and this lack of understanding
becomes its own numb beckoning.
Mornings are given back

to be tasted again, to be moved amongst
to be all those other mornings

stretching ahead
rolling endlessly back

to that time before mornings began
to Not-morning, that shadow that constantly threatens,
still living as it does in our own unseeing.

But now I am free to rejoice
raucous and clamouring cries.

I exhort the sky to break through the walls of my house
and it does.

I urge the grass to deepen the green of its greenest parts
and it does.

I look into the earth and it spills out its mineral self.

I walk amongst my own body and it is filled with light.