

To the Sound of the Gate

Hinge squeak and the small groan
of the spring turning in sleep
both wakened by the cluck
of the latch tongue
and the gate opening

long after the gate is gone
and the fence down
all the square pickets each one
and the shadows in between
painted green over brown
through the summer afternoon

vanished in mid-air
at Fourth Street by the corner
and inside the gate
that is not there
the flight of steps to the front door
gone and the door they climbed to
and the garden etched on its window
sealed up and shingled over

only the sound of you opening
is still there

To the Afterlife

The way we talk

before those whom we tell ourselves
do not hear us

is that really the way
we talk the rest of the time
how can we ever be sure of it
once we start listening
to ourselves as we do
when we talk in front of you

and when are you not there

how old you must be
who do not sleep
and never meet our eyes
though you are never out of them
you who were not born

if you do not hear us
we can ask anything of you

listen

now in the still night
the sound of breathing
remember it
whether you hear it or not