

Inventory

White walls and ceilings; a pallor of wood;
light from no quarter, as broad as it's wide;

daylight—not daylight, but everything else;
two shapes on the bed, one true and one false;

the quiet of clock-time repeating itself
on steel-clear mirrors on no one's behalf

but for everyone's good, while the work goes on
with nobody here, or you here alone

to take down the names from a brilliant wall,
to polish and burnish, and not bewail

the uncountable dead, with their elegies spun
thinly to nothing, and bleached to oblivion,

though not on your time. Categories shift
where the strips of beech-wood are whited and stiff,

and light at no angle gives no quarter
to glasses or blinds or shadows on plaster

as letters come round in backwards reflection,
jumbled, untouchable, sometimes uncertain,

with particulars glaring; the fall of a sparrow;
the bringing together of technique and sorrow.

As Seen

The house of stone,
too visible
in its one field,
dumb as a sign
you see for miles,

without a purpose
or a purpose long
gone, not known,
is always now
no home to us

now home is gone,
like the last field
of stone and clover,
and there's no sign
of us, or for us,

in that place, where
the visible ground
rises for miles,
then without purpose
it goes down

beneath the horizon
to pitch and turn
with an invisible
cargo of bodies
that pitch and turn

and that run rings
around the sky
till dusk or dawn
(no more than in
the way of things),

so no one sees
except ourselves
the dark and plain
lights in a mesh
of wires for miles

and in desperation
we force ourselves
to our bare flesh
again, and again
in desperation

as a dumb sign,
but miles away;
the tangled cry
not ours, not known;
the house of clay.