

WHEN I AM COMING TO TERMS THEY COME

When I am coming to terms they come,
and I watch them slosh by the window.
This is a wooden block of time which

blackens at sky and ground.
We can't stop winding up
yelling from the backs

of trucks, on our way
to one border or another. I can't
keep tracks; they flee from me.

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I have forgotten the range
of our instruments. Today
they only crane their necks to stare,
refuse to make sound: the cello balking
at the double-stop; the trumpet
bowed over, clutching its mute.

Tonight I'm sitting, trying to coax the piano
into articulating its complaint.
The keys stubborn. Each wait
between notes just sprays us
with want. We stab at maps,
with sucked-on fingers. The silence
is landlocking.
I am merging onto several highways.
I am, in principle, open to strangers.
Still the spaces keep growling for something.

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Tonight down skinny streets in a city,
all the adults are doubled over the cobbles,
laughing or crying I'm not quite sure;
I've forgotten how to get close.

Instead I bob up and down like
a meerkat, peering into letterboxes and down and down
dresses; sometimes I fall over
myself, and this can no longer be

an accident. We shouldn't be standing at an ATM.
We shouldn't drink from rivers shouldn't fill
ourselves with thoughts
of giardia crawling through our bodies'

linings. Still, there's only a snatch of a minute left
till my mind reverts back to its mirrorings.
I only hope in the interim
something may've snapped.

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I look out, and the terms are still sloshing
by our window, past cobwebs nestled
in hedges like fog. Barely there.
I fashion some antlers

to guard my brain. I fashion some worlds
built of bits of sound I've captured—
a radio's bristling; a sticky
lock's turning; bare cough

from the last truck out of the
forest—and I keep the thought
(the hope?) that these sounds,
these small attempts at breath, might hold us.