

LIGHT AS A QUALITY OF MERCY

I

At the end of each short winter day
the dark entered the kitchen
just as the milk came in warm
from the barn. And grandma lighted a lamp

as for some hulking gentle
stranger who had travelled far,
was tired and had little to say.

II

From Elaine's cupped hand a baby
light is born at the candle tip
and you can see its delicate breathing
making friends of the faces around the room.

III

The switches flip, one-two-three-four,
and light leaps out hard as guns
to occupy precisely the oblong room.

MOUNTAINS

This quiet of mountains whispering to mountains could demand your
complete disappearance in the most blatant sunlight.
Winds shake their heads, they'll have nothing to do with these trees, not
even the tallest.

A road ancient as Abraham's cattle leads your fifty-miles-an-hour on and
on and says nothing.

Although ear and eye may swivel in every primitive direction, they will
not detect anything at all
because events happen here like unimaginable sculptures, neutral, to one
side or the other of every place there is
and they keep no time small enough for clock-towers.

The stillness among mountains has no right whatever.
It may be only the subtlest bones in your own head vibrating.