

THE PRIVACIES

In the middle of marriage a sameness
and a loss no one's love can sustain.
When you have gone I rush downstairs to greet you.
When you were here I forgot.

Over the bare hill of the bed
our absence arrives, it fills up space.
We are loveless, though our orbits touch.
What is forgiven will hurt.

We toss in sleep like mute guests
sharing regrets, sharing our loneliness,
without photographs of ancestors,
without tiny gold watches to wind.

Steven Orlen

TSIGANOS

He picks up a stone
to sharpen his knife.
There is nothing, no one
under the stone.
The sun is furious
and circles him slowly
like an opponent.
It holds the future
thin as a knife blade
blind as the verb to be.
It falls on the knife
and the blade wastes
sharpened on stone.
All the fish in the bay
are two thousand years old.
Why does it suddenly
have to be me?