

Judith Skillman

TIC DOULOUREUX

The trigger is sensation.
The violin's a dirty animal.
I want you to take away the suddenness.
Pain up the side of my head.
I'll have my teeth extracted one by one.
See if it makes any difference.
Rehearse for the real.
Be either present or absent.
I'll let my fingers drum ebony.
Thinking makes it worse.
I'll take the beat inside myself
and feel it up the center of my body.
A string through my head.
Imagine a hand pierced at the center by a wire.
I won't refer to Jesus or the crucifixion.
No blood in this exercise.
Let the hand move freely up and down this wire.
I'll wipe my nose when the bow
comes toward my face.
My head itches during the Vitali.
Lightning finds a way to enter the earth.
It's a pity music rises and falls.
Hide these bolts in a rock.
Insects carve sand trails as they enter the crab's eyes.
The thing of death is the animal knows when it's happening.
I'll leave a relic.
Any kind of pain.