

Then four walls,

seven windows
reappear. Our shoes
show up, right where we left them, glasses
poised beside the bed, which led us into
such an indistinction: it now pulls apart
into the two of us, meiotic aftermath . . .
There is a ticking, there's
a cooling off. Come to my senses, I can see
nine inches from my face
the watched wrists fallen
on a pillow, side by side:
attached to different
beings in time:

one is a bracket of lidded silvers, fast asleep;
the other's open, strapped with hide . . .

THE WOMAN WHO LAUGHED ON CALVARY

Smilers, grinners,
smirkers, spinners
of wishes for nice
and nicer days: I didn't
laugh like you, who live for mere
amusement. The truth is
laughter's not

a mark of pleasure,
either intended or ex-,
no simple pleasantry outspread
or, smiling, rent: instead
it is the sign of a delirium,
spilt brain upon split
lip, an uncontainable
interiority—

(make no mistake, the interior
is horror: your own deepest
intimate is there, made of redder smear
and whiter seepages than any mouthpiece now
can tell—at first only the most
ephemeral offal and then the least and then
(not least, beneath) the lasting
stones and struts, insensate, to which
yea these many centuries the hope
of slime has always
loved adhering . . . Your
interior life! Your pet
pretense! It can't be kept
up, kept clean even, even
in a thought, except
a good bloodworks or shitpump keeps it so.)
Out of the mouth comes nothing decorous

but words, and even words
can't save the fiction. All our belches,
cries, upchucks and sneezes, puffings, hiccups,
kissing sounds and coughs are
laughter: get it straight: a laugh is nothing
smiled or mild or meanwhiling— a laugh's
got teeth in it, immediate, and spit; for grimace is
its closest kin, a grimacing with wind.
It issues always from
an inadvertency, it bursts
out, will be damned—a vent
of rage or irony right
in the shrine of signs . . . I call it
laughter: voice of expiration,
sorrow's very archery

and signature: the hoist of flesh arrayed
on roost of skeleton. The common wisdom
is I laughed in heartlessness
or mockery: perhaps I did—
but at the long and short of it, what good
comes to, the soft and hard, the awful
fact that what's alive will rot,
what lasts can't feel. I felt

how terrible a figure
human being cuts, upon its frame.
And so the laugh like a cry from my own
perscrewed, misnailed, cross-crafted armature
rang out, outrang the meeker mourners and
polite conventioners . . . The heart

is a muscle. The tooth is a fang.
What I gave at the sight of him there
was up. What I got of humanity there
was the hang . . .

CONNUBIAL

Dream is matterless, it dips
from bounds to billowings,

laws lapse in it,
or universes swerve.

Before I had
an other at my side

there was no side: how far
can onesome go? Just being