

PARAGRAMS

In a manner of speaking: a man here, a woman there. At the table
with blue napkins unfolded, the steam from
coffee unfolding, the black sky, the streetlights on and on
— this is the construction, this touching legs
underneath the table, elegant and primitive talk. The message
is worked in for tomorrow, that funny word
cartwheeling in spring grass. When the thermometer tells
the truth and the wristwatch will wake us for
it, we will be called off the monkey bars back in
to science, old subjective science held
together with gyros. After the rope-burns from too much
pulling have healed, we're ready to become

truly anonymous, for the better, for each other's sake,
the opposite of enormous, greedy, one-up. The world
has gone kind of hypnotic, the drug of the elevator, the shiny eyes,
change of address, the crowd-pleasers: backgammon
in Bedlam, breakfast tea in Bethlehem, one hundred year old coffee
still on the back burner burning up. It's a blur,
a being dragged around town tied to the bumper. It's a war:
so-and-so knocked down so-and-so's fence, freshly
painted. Finely died has double meanings. Some mornings
the mourning doves sound insincere. Who knows,
the cat patrolling the sidewalks rolls for strangers, we're all
friends, we're harmless. The night sky

with braids of light, dressed, undressed, dressed. The rest
of us here forget. Forget the man
falling off his horse, the pine cones falling, the easy
gallop of light in the trees, the slow line
past the baker's, the rooftops conversing and angular,
the wildness of leaves painted on the Chinese elms.
The message of the tea-pot is not only drink, it's *has* drunk,
will finish, will drink, will sit in

the sink afterwards. It's the *will* do this, will do that,
picking up the obvious stone for
another ocean, bending over, leaning into what appears to be
a second light after the first has finished.