

DREAM OF THE OVERLOOK

after Stanley Kubrick's The Shining

Already the present starts plotting its recurrence
somewhere in the future, weaving what happens
in among our fabrics, launching its aroma, its music
imbuing itself into floorboards, plaster, nothing can
stop it, it can't stop itself. You will never have access
to its entirety, and you have asked how to calculate

what resists calculation, how to control what refuses
to cooperate, but know full well a propensity to resist
and to refuse is the source of its power. The winters
can be fantastically cruel, as if the weather can see
what happened here before and flares itself up as a way
to remember, or else it intuits what evil is about

to happen and does what it can to divert it, stands on
haunches to frighten it off. On the other hand maybe
what happens and the weather are working together,
and one does what it can to push the other one up
over mountains, across a carpet. All this calculating
exactness of modern life, one result of our monetary

economy, shares an ideal with the natural sciences—
namely, to transform the world into a math problem.
The air feels so different, one can smell the privilege
emanating from a battery of pine—one must build
a fortress of it, all the best people, one gold afternoon
unraveling through sleep into another: some visitors

complain of nausea, vertigo, chills, feelings of dread,
confusion, but it's so beautiful here... hard to believe
a snowstorm could be that close. I want to go outside,
stretch out in the sun. Yet to our north, to our west,
it's snowing and cold, and it's moving as if conveyed
down corridors into rooms whose many tribal motifs

have amplified over decades into labyrinths invisible
to the naked eye but solid nonetheless, so that to walk
through a door means to face a number of possibilities
greatly circumscribed by history: left, right, left, right
to the immaculate bathroom from which much steam
shall gallop; right, right, left, left to the improbably

large bed where one lies sleeping; right, left, left, right
to a window overlooking the hedge maze into which
somewhere in the future, quieter and away from what
habits have kept us from feeling what static has kept us
going, unknowingly, we venture. Each of us a creature
whose existence depends upon difference, our minds

27

discovering themselves in the differences between
present impressions and those that have preceded.
I think it might be a good idea if you leave the radio
on all the time now. The torrents keep building up
against a barrier far too fatigued to withstand much
more. As if at any minute. As if even the snow, falling,

possessed a little consciousness, near-infinite voices
boisterous with parenting advice, spiritual guidance,
stock tips, ribaldry, and grievances from the long lost.
No less as ghosts we consume ourselves in press.
Let me explain something to you. Many years from now,
on the verge of sleep, someone will be lying down

where I am lying now, and he or she will suffer, suddenly,
what I am suffering now, and where I come from,
we call that success. One must first become open, flung
wide or pried apart, to an order of feeling foreign
to most, a form of surrender to thought and occurrence
through apparatus not your own, hours of rendezvous

with the absent, the air, the demonic. Obviously some
people can be put off by the idea of staying alone
in a place where something like that actually happened
once, much less one where it happens all the time,
but when we reckon ourselves haunted, it is beyond
mere house. Now hold your eyes still so that I can see.

28

Midnight: the construction draws attention to its secret
passages; in intimate office, a wisdom is revealed
in the periphrasis a finance counselor laps from a lap.
The stars: and quiet, through evening's hush, a stranger
murmuring tranquility to those closed in the narrow
cell arousing beyond or before more bourbon takes.

And you: that voice from afar, a flow of warm waves
I drift off remembering, that radiance through clouds
archaically measured in foot-candles: I think you hurt
my head real bad. Admittedly you're under binding
contract to do so. On the flipside much of the damage
has animated production of the interior as I know it,

made me more myself making brute with me, kindling
them old predatory embers never quite satisfactorily
displaced into numbers, as off in the distance, almost
picturesquely, the blizzard obliterates the humming
topography of Colorado, the hard writing of the place:
one sentence reconfigured page after page, no progress

but insistence, an entity meant in the plural, not single
wolves but a pack: in believing oneself to be just one
one made the first mistake. I think the next is to think
of the axe in our hands, blood everywhere, rather than
just pick it up, get on with it. One's economic interests
don't tell me to smother the beast in me, they tell us

to put it to work. I and the others have come to believe
somewhere in the future it will be just like nothing
ever happened, or like the sound of the horn at the heart
of nowhere. Notice the group photo in which I stand
apart from but attached to. I feel I should die if I let myself
be drawn into the center no less than if I just let go.