

DREAMSCAPE: FAUNCE HOUSE

MARK HALLIDAY

This is it, the building they all have been mentioning,
Faunce House. Someone said it has three levels
but did that mean three plus the level below ground?

When a building gets named Faunce House someone must be
very sure about something. Is there a connection between
what there is to be so sure about and the way

those girls wear those necklaces and bracelets?
If I checked every room in Faunce House
I might find an office where the connection is explained

but all I know is where the mailboxes are downstairs.
I have found my mailbox, #366. It clicks open
for me only. Someone decided #366 was for me only

43

so it must be right for me to be here in Faunce House.
Why are the corridors so dark and quiet?
Are there not hundreds of people in the building?

Why am I moving along this corridor again,
I came this way two minutes ago. Where is that girl
the one who passed me twice as if for a reason

the one with the dark necklace she must have her own mailbox
with a number—I must have a calm expression;
I must not seem ridiculous in Faunce House.

My father's not in the building but I hear him say
Just buy her a drink. Just talk to the Chairman.
No one's going to do it for you.

Downstairs if I turn one way there are the ping pong tables.
Two Asian guys hit the ball with unbelievable spin.
Maybe for them the hitting with spin is a sufficient response

to the layers and levels and stairs and walkways and lobbies
of Faunce House; but I can't hit with spin.
My father told me a person can walk straight ahead into reality

but in Faunce House there are staircases and corridors
and offices known only to the ones who know
and they learned it all back before, before I even noticed

the strangely shadowed staircase and corridor.
Here are the soda machines. For someone it would be enough
to brashly insert the coins and receive the clunking can

44

and walk—walk to a purposeful place. Piano lobby,
snack bar, Blue Room, the Faunce House Theatre
where bright clear examples of humanity can be viewed—

I must keep moving, not stand in a swoon of doubt—
there, that's her, there she goes around that corner,
down those stairs, with a place to go, gone—

she may cross that catwalk that leads to the Green Room
where the players paint each other's bodies
for some ceremony or dance or comedy

that I could witness if I buy a ticket—surely
the ticket office is open at certain times
I must not be ridiculous I must go somewhere

what if I sit in the Blue Room and read Plato's *Symposium*
over and over, quietly—how long until she of the dark necklace
comes close and wants to talk?