

## A D E S C E N T

1  
For awhile you lay back in the body's darkness,  
so well you could not find yourself.  
Sometimes reading a book to stay alive,  
supporting a casual value in conversation,  
you began to know yourself. Voices would rise,  
gradually emptied of preferences,  
but that was memory. You lay  
at the center of your nervousness.

2  
Very quiet, each occasion of crisis  
tried to be an event—was, briefly—then  
drew back. Grief became the best company,  
a contentment private with its musk  
of sober anticipation. You lay in the dark;  
there was a clock you could not hear well enough  
whose face was horrible. Your feeling  
for it stopped. After a time the world returned:

3  
If death was common, still it shaded  
some events, providing a field in which  
the characters cover their eyes while walking,  
talking sometimes melodiously,  
exchanging affairs & small griefs  
in which they essentially agree.  
Even the low music of pain, rising,  
was solemn, shaded by death, & balanced.