

EARLY TO BED

Outside my office, they're knocking down some wall or other across the hall. I'm supposed to be next, have boxed all my books, covered plants, removed the painting and even pulled the plug on the little clock you gave me the year we spent worrying about culture and art, social order, unsocial impulses, till Kant got a headache too.

The workmen knock faintly, afraid to be disturbing. I reassure them I'm all set, can't wait in fact, revere their work. Well, one says, We haven't gotten no complaints today, so that's good. He can grin! I hand him an orange section, as if to say, Eat up. He stands there fingering it, perhaps the connection with our being in something together. We're not strangers, pal, I try, Never should be, whatever happens. He shakes his head and murmurs something like, Well, we're ready. I should go to bed earlier anyway, I say, toss him the key.