

BEING AWAY

Changed by distance
the shapes of old friends appear—
rectangular,
stamped with wavy kisses,
ghost-money brought by the man in gray.
They haunt,
they call me back
with words
like tiny hooks.
Each phrase is the noose that waits
at the end of a leash,
I am tripped and snared
by the loops of g's and y's.
It makes no difference.
I am here. Away.
Forgetting those faces.
Spending whole evenings
erasing a nose or a chin,
moving my mind back and forth
slowly
with the care of a forger
until nothing is left
but a blur, thumbprints
where their faces were.
This is best.
The fine art of forgetfulness
is best—
to drift without memory
through a deep winter
lonely as a man
in a coma, free
as a sleeping bear,
or at most writing myself, saying:
Keep in touch.
The above address is unknown.
It is hopeless to try to reach me.
There is no good news.