

AT BABLOCKHYTHE

The ferry over the Thames had sunk, but a schoolmaster
from Henley, red-eyed, a wild rose in his buttonhole
took us across in his boat. He insisted that you row,
that you were an American Indian, gently insisted
(as he talked past us into some place that we could not see)
that we stop for a drink with him, that we only listen.

We took the narrow path, pitted by cattle hooves,
away from the river, while it began to rain,
and found, almost in the path, a wild rabbit
hunched quietly. He should have run, he should have been afraid,
but his eye was gone. In the shock of that red furrow
he ignored us, moving inward towards his dying.

I wake later and later, red-eyed, slack
in these leaden long-dark mornings, try to pretend
that desires and purposes will use up the day,
but I lose things easily, almost as if I lost
the idea of what connected me and them,
now you have gone, over sea, into your own journey.