

RESPONDER

Dim presence, where do we belong?

Out in a far-flung mind I spent
numb seconds counting possible homes. Pale self

those marble bodies of the long-ago dead
were polished till they're sweating
under overheads you feed

a coin into the wall to keep on. Last a minute, about. The steep white slope
her neck cuts brightest, head flung back out of
definition. Where her face shades out the mania begins:

are you there are you there. It's the dream of never
needing company, not speaking for however many hours, sometimes 181
days I walk up to this stone place on the hill

then back again. Wonder between. Then bunked below a man
night air groans in and out of. There's some square heavy thing
up on a high shelf in my chest that gets

pushed off, it keeps happening. Pigeons
swishing just above the hostel ceiling THAT I
SHOULD SOMETIMES HAVE THE FOLLOWING

VISION: I SAW AN after curfew, strangers' bodies harden into sleep,
their cells charge sky blue squares, occasional chime, a guest, my skin
gone dark. Lights off. Mornings I eat peaches till my hands stick shut,

the evenings here are bronze sieves we get sifted through,
my habits pestled finer now, a powder blown about
a dilute ANGEL VERY NEAR ME, ON MY

LEFT, IN CORPOREAL FORM, WHICH IS NOT USUAL WITH ME
FOR THE static sequence tries to resolve: in this
life we're little first and then the objects each get touched

by pin and air let slowly out so you might feel you're large and it's called getting
older. But nothing changed. What I spend of life is given back to me
unaltered, another day a slightly different temperature but otherwise

but otherwise the same. Reply the numerals ARE OFTEN
REPRESENTED to my mind. From their stacked beds rise. Am I
close to him? Then broke up into multiples, to restless, wireless

182 heights the calculating spirit tends, its
satellite mild-gleaming in dead air no breath pollutes. Look down
and tell me what I'm doing there TO ME AND YET IT IS WITHOUT

MY SEEING THEM the mine from which
the marble was cut from which I was
five. I was a child for the first time

permitted to record the message. It was in the days of answering
machines. AND AT THE ARROW'S just wings scuffling against the roof.
You only walk up from the square and put your coin in and the light stays

on however many cents you've paid of time. It's what
I come to see, the glare about her
loose white arm carved limp as tissue POINT THERE

SEEMED TO BE A LITTLE FIRE. HE
APPEARED TO ME I afterwards begged to be walked out to
the corner, quarter passed from fist to mouth was sour to tongue

I slid it wet into the slot
and bought my own voice telling me I wasn't there, "please leave -

*I had a little life it was
a pin to keep me fixed down to
the ground a specimen in time its
silver head my minute
mirror to a single prick
of color unattached*

Black cashmere tightening
its orbit at the throat of a tourist penciling the flexed
foot of the Ecstasy in his notes. Did you feel it ring? Make me recall

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my sense through varicose marble
to convey to the changing current
"I will let, I know the edge, I wanted to go" on

the map we used to own that was what is
beneath me, thumbtacks sunk into
such delicate sky-blue water. Overheard

myself in the bar where the dates are
chipped out of the wood ask a stranger which it was
and how many I've been gone, each one with a private ledge

and a long way down that was
passage "that was just a number
I told you to give you an answer."