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A Descent

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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.