Births of Images and Deaths

Tom Raworth

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BIRTHS OF IMAGES AND DEATHS

for Stan and Jane Brakhage

he turns
it is the leather skullcap
on his head

i am lost
they turn through all connections
of light

in rhythm
now they walk behind the smoke
and turn

they are acting
it appears
the pit depends on her hair's weight

gold into feathers
the smoke is them
the eyes of doors open

it is clay
the city on a table
the smoke thinks

now she is perfectly lit
stone is a hummingbird
poised feeding at the image

and there is more
always on the way
a simple change like hair's death

lips under a nose
under eyes teeth
behind lips and all in the spectrum of grey

8
where is the lost color?
wandering in the machine
strange boils, scurvy, on the machines

but chosen
the last chord
you must leave now

Tom Raworth

ONCE OR TWICE

No country would have me
Where I was born slips my mind
Uncontrollably

Once or twice
Climbing unfamiliar steps
I’ve discovered a lost bend or sock

The host’s wife wears
A heavenly smile
In an embroidered frock

So like a good child
I confess my perplexities

Of the two standing at the window
One speaks of his regular habits
In a remote world

Soon he’ll hurry
Like a ghost at daybreak
To his rented room

For the first time
You notice me