If I at Least Believed in God

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"I threaten—I overthrow"
"My baby's hungry."

The body gives birth to its justice and defends it. The body makes the flower spits out the pip-death tumbles down, flies motionless whirls around the cesspool (motion of the world) in dream the body is triumphant or is found naked in the streets enduring; it loses its teeth it trembles erotically its earth bursts like a watermelon and it's finished.

If I at Least Believed in God

If I at least believed in God your hands would have infinite interpretations when they move and lift me up to heaven a heaven like Rilke's with sad angels blowing loneliness down to earth implied wings timid in their speech for they do not exist.

If I at least believed in God my absurd insistence on self-torture on stepping out of the white circle of small happiness would have been explained to me I would have a stone in me
strength
for the endless elegy
of my life.
But I'll remain
with my elbows on the table
motionless watching you eating
hoping for an unnatural memory
longer than any light
you'll live.
When your sun has set
in time
with your swelling curly basil
the grey of your head
helpless, blind
you'll call out for your son Benjamin
in the dark
cataract death
clouding your glasses
and as the nurses
noiselessly close the doors
in your brain
the syllables will tumble down
my voice will deafen you
as if I were calling your name
beyond the sea.

If I at least believed in God
the separation from your body
my body
would be temporary
and death would have no
other consequences.

Chicago, March, 1975

Translated by Philip Ramp