

1976

Old Records

William Matthews

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Your face is most difficult,
the head is extremely hard to get.
Already your face is not the one
I remember. My own fingers confuse me
as I trace the curve of your forehead.
Your eyes confound me. They fly away
as I touch them.

My bed is breaking
with the weight of this problem.
I am lying on splinters.
I want you to know that all this
means something. It is my life's work.

Old Records / William Matthews

Les shows me his new Braun
tape deck. "After I've played them
three or four times I can hear records
begin to grind down. Now I play
them once, to tape." He's got a wall
of them, uncirculated coins.
Things go by, the summer draining
into the fall, breweries consolidate,
there's a golf course where the woods
were. We're like a fire
and save things from ourselves.
Furtwangler's too fast fourth movement
that I love, Coltrane breaking
his breath in the hissing rapids,
Janis in heat, Janis in scratch,
Bjoerling's beautiful voice
ruined by whisky—
fuzz on the ripe notes and fuzz
continuing to grow.