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## Lives of the Mind

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## LIVES OF THE MIND

I wake in pjs crenellated and badged,  
my head full of 18th century French  
battle strategies. My god! I'm Napoleon!  
What can I possibly say to my creative  
writing class now? How stop Heather  
from deliquescing when I explain why  
Ed thought her poem about her grandfather's  
funeral was about a fashion show?  
Heather, good specifics but

you must attack in a pincer with the foot  
then follow on the flank with the horse.  
You must try to appear bigger than you are  
when encountering the coyote. You must  
move towards the body-blow even though  
it's counter-intuitive, then when  
the baby's out, dry it off, and keep it warm.  
No need to cut the cord unless

the hospital's miles away.  
All the wrong people are dreaming of Duchamp.  
Art is one prolonged un-understanding  
just as dawn is day's un-understanding of the night  
and while suffering may not ennoble,  
it sure sweetens the singing voice. Oh,  
how I miss those small flakey cakes  
of Corsica. Frequent urination  
is often a problem for older men

but no one's having the problems I'm having.  
Retreat? Never! I believe this heart  
will be my only heart, this mule my only mule.  
A shadow races through me, profaning  
the sky, and I walk without a companion wolf.  
Ridges of high pressure, continued valley  
heat, these wounds are not deep  
but go the whole way through.