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I

Richard Robbins

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RICHARD ROBBINS

*I*

You arrive at a place where  
*I* doesn't matter. You're tired  
of hearing yourself talk, star  
in the celebrated farce

billed as drama, titled *Me*.  
The sea, the mountains come in  
and out of your life, children  
grow beyond you—still, the one

voice hardest to leave, the first  
person, holds to you from his  
central cave position, armed  
with the old clips and soundtracks

projected against concave,  
distorting walls. He needs to  
be told the war's over. He  
needs to leave the stronghold, to

come out with his hands up, high  
as surrender requires. You  
may pull the brittle palm fronds  
from the rusty helmet, douse

the uniform and burn it.  
Be gentle pulling leeches  
from his back. In the drama  
of his life, they open leaks

into your life, into you,  
where he will, naked, finally  
arrive, smug to have cast off  
most things personal—*I*,

now *you*, on his way to *he*.  
Be gentle passengers toward  
the new place, your memories each  
dislodged, at large on the train,

observing your fine progress.  
If you're asked, don't be alarmed  
to give up more: fingerprints,  
your tongue, that seat you'd dare to claim.