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Busy Week: Being Busy; Very Busy; Really Busy

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Brenda Hillman

Busy Week

Being Busy

—Dots of blue permission
came out of your head;
you were thinking faster, and the part
that couldn’t think said, Don’t despair;

but you had to be quiet
in relation to the cave, to study sentences,
because you’d never learned
not to be busy, they
had helped you to be busy,
you worked harder until,

of the three
kinds of logic, you had learned four—

___

Very Busy

—Everyone talked about how much
busier they were. Friends
became the type
that could work on a poem while driving . . .

Malls with fountains did too much
(you didn’t have to go along with that)
but slowing down took time too (Something
missing here?)   Or
maybe you could read less. The novels
wouldn't mind. Snails made little Niles with their bodies
till flatness is what they saw,

moved with silk instinct
when they moved from doubt
though not
getting it done was the accomplishment—

Really Busy

—You yelled at the broken sunbeam
   Slow down!
(It hurried across the office, having passed

an event that hadn’t happened . . .)
   What’s to be done about busyness?
   but how could the sunbeam help.

   An island learned the water’s face
   because the water had surrounded it . . .
   If you can’t do less

   you can count and
   if you can’t calm down at least
   tell them you’re not coming—