"LEFT AT THE GATE" IS NOT A DIRECTION
for Tom Raworth

To see slant-eyes in the rake of the sun is going a bit too far but to have a very loose grip.... Go ahead respect yourself and throw your life away. Brag about dawn in Tribeca and the heroin and the egg you lay in your heart. Stand out there on a public street and say to yourself out loud "Look at you!" After all the face powder has settled what matters is what effect it has what I do. Offhand I call my act about as dangerous as a long glazed fingernail snatching at a baby-blue flood. Too fast for blood to hang on to the windshield going too fast to smell. If I enthuse and dance around the place saying anything like "Let it go!" I will personally hit myself upside the head with my certified barn-burnerthurible. Just open my hands and keep my mouth shut. They will find me with watch and wallet intact and by that time all the saints led by Curt Flood will have already met me at the low dark door. "I'm home honey!" and slamming behind me not a door a gate and the maid's name I've never employed a maid before her name sounds like "Arrow Ditch" and she crosses to me under an endless and black nothingness for ceiling perhaps sky with a small fire behind the bar next to the glasses and darts. Last time I felt this good getting home the place was a poolhall. Makes me a new man every time they close the place.

So I'm a flame emerging from something like tomato sauce. I ride the crest of a wave and the taxi blinded by the bus misses me and runs over a small fire instead. I keep on walking eating myself clean out of dignity. I go to superior sound sources in the black palpable dome untainted by stars. Just a regular gaze from the sailboat of love I mean time. I'm alone but it isn't always this way just when I get from one place to another. My hands are not only open they are inside-out. I am coming for you. You better not be waiting. If they aim to take it away get rid of it. When we meet again I am without bumps and you are a little more dangerous.

It's a frosty road but eventually I learn how to fight. A new kind of warmth although I still indulge in the other pockets of warmth. Nine ways to swing this life said on it. It's not a sad kind of grim unless you're looking for it all over town. Just these few little live performances like a one-man territory band. It's dirty and alpine at the same time. April and I see my breath in front of me at 60 F. The jaws of life and the kiss of death. When we want to play we play and maybe not the right thing. Getting some fun out of life can be weird. A trumpet avoids the beat. A gray light on hairless skin. The sun goes down and everything looks real again.

John Godfrey
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