



\*

To make nothing  
draw a circle  
around what isn't there

\*

I found a note I left in the corner  
of a part of the poem we rarely used

*If you ever feel trapped*  
it said  
*this is where to escape*

\*

But legally I owe you nothing  
I owe you at least that much

\*

Like being haunted by the spirit of the letter

\*

I remember my teacher's story  
of two teenagers who died in a storm  
trying to stay warm  
and the tailpipe  
blocked with snow

so I always check

but it still happens  
just yesterday  
a man's young son in what the paper  
called *one awful story*

\*

The light switch has a beautiful feeling  
when a person reaches out to make it change



through the gravel

They have big plans to meet  
in the middle  
and in so doing  
to phase all this out

\*

I go on  
say enough and it will blur  
off into sound  
look up and see that night  
has nearly settled in and darkness  
and hope that if I look into it  
long enough and keep my mouth  
quiet  
when I look down again I'll find  
a settled word  
to which nothing  
is attached

\*

Re: the day  
someone said  
*what doesn't kill you makes it longer*

\*

It's like footsteps toward you  
that sound for all the world like  
they forever move away

\*

I keep forgetting I'm the smoke  
not the camera  
Then I see my dark  
joining sky to what's below





\*

The subsection of sympathy cards  
labeled *words fail me*  
*sorry for your loss* on which we pen

\*

The lights that come on last—  
what were they resisting?

Or do they not notice  
as sometimes can happen

while the hours carry in  
the new-fallen dark

\*

They say we have *fallen*  
*a long way*  
to the *cold and*  
*planetary light*

\*

They say *the bomb is a flower*

\*

A body falls much faster  
than the night

\*

You will forgive me won't you  
for the lines  
I'm copying in  
I do not want to be alone here  
despite what I have said

\*

And I have forgotten  
to mention the music

though it has this whole time  
been mentioning me

I will say it is the sound of a clock  
which has had all of its hours removed

\*

endless the smoke cloud  
the blooming

\*

The screen is dark enough now  
that it can perfectly reflect  
the facing window  
a corner of morning

\*

And some of the lights  
trying to decide                    they tremble  
whether they can go on

\*

Lights like pronouns for the buildings

\*

to remove to go through to withdraw  
to slowly walk into another room

\*

What is legally an hour?  
The time it takes the king  
to fall asleep  
                    the melting  
of a candle in the snow

\*

Hour like *a jar in Tennessee*

\*

And yes *I am afraid*  
*to be with minutes*

*They have completely confused me*

\*

The buildings are a sort  
of interference  
                    how they stand  
and complicate the sky

but nothing interferes  
with the hour

                    it is  
as they say  
                    a law  
unto itself

\*

Maybe I should say that  
                                    *I am sitting*  
*in a room*  
                    *different from*  
*the one you are in now*

and I am sitting at a distance  
from the screen  
                    so that the hour

goes on  
and there is nothing  
that I can undo

\*

Every morning the diminishing returns

\*

And now the smoke echoes the roundness  
of the one building with a dome

the smoke in love and unable  
to do anything more than repeat

the words of another

so after *I would sooner be dead*  
*than let you touch me*

it cries hopeless

*touch me*  
*touch me*

and then even that sound  
drifts away  
that shape

\*

If I could get closer I could see  
the river

reflecting back  
the buildings' light

but I am placed *here*  
at this fixed distance  
and the lights are fixed *there*

in the permanently imminent night

\*

I know there are other cities  
other hours

where you can watch the lights  
*copying themselves*  
*all neoned and strobe-beated*

\*

I know *all our yesterdays have lighted fools*  
*the way to dusky death*

\*

Today the reflected window  
seems stupid  
and too bright

replacing smoke with the pale sky  
and the tree  
its bare branches  
a cracking explosion

no eye could resist

\*

to justify desires with omens

\*

to walk away before the morning ends

\*

I'm counting my life  
I'm counting the buildings

one one two

\*

If you are in the center it means  
every edge you can imagine  
is the very same distance away

\*

If this is my home

If this is my screen

If these are my books

imagined companions

\*

This is the city

I can describe it

black

with power

an electricity

forced into light