

*Untitled*  
by Alice Attie

Who was he who  
showed up briefly in the morning to  
reappear in the photograph on the bookshelf  
who was he gone but whispering in the crook of the ear  
a distance a nearness something  
trembling as a slip of memory lifts the veil of it  
knocks on the door of it rounds the corner of it  
breaks it pounds into the powder of it  
pulsing the air hung with images shivering  
sounding seeing hearing they come towards one  
they circle they dip they rise one and then the another  
who was he who showed in the half-light  
half-wholly there to touch to look at  
something in the face or the belly of it  
who was he who teased the half-sight  
flickering visible invisible almost  
poised to jimmy himself up to lean on and be cinched as a dream is  
cinched as the subject in the object of the room is cinched  
as candescence and shadow are and were and will be  
never again who was he who stood at the door  
a silence repeating an absence a million times  
she called a million images in the morning faded

*Departures*  
by Alice Attie

Because we wade into being as into a sea.  
Because we steady ourselves in tandem,  
tables set, our hearts full.

Because we learn to tongue the impossible,  
measuring our proximities in letters,  
in books, on walls, in conversation.

Because gravity pulls. We bend into it. We bend  
into heaviness, into darkness, into weight,  
emptying our sleeves, our pockets.

Because our presences are parallel,  
as beams of light, we step into them,  
reciprocal, as breath, as becoming.

Because with our bodies centered,  
still or wavering, we are framed in languages,  
in the poverty and plentitude of speech.

Because one by one, we bend into being.  
Approaching and retreating, our numbers mount,  
climbing the span of a day, a year, a lifetime.

Because we are what we are, wading into  
facts and fictions, to claim them, to re-imagine them,  
to proclaim, our hearts full, a presence.

*We Shape it for the Imagination*  
by Alice Attie

Your face in the café window reflects  
a candle waving its flag against the  
glass. It signals comfort, being here  
in the sumptuous evening light.

It is a grammar to write ourselves by,  
being tangible in the intangible.  
We converse, heedless, into the  
warmth. We stumble into it.

Sentiment. Possibility.  
Swinging back and forth, we can whisper,  
murmuring stories, filling spaces,  
feathering our hearts.

For desire, poised in the long syllable of speech,  
deepens. It flecks our conversation silver, to  
loosen, to lift these inklings, to try them,  
to strut and stray for their attentions.

We are not forever, she thinks.  
We will not endure. These strangers  
passing the window are what we are, all.  
It will claim us, in the café, where it hangs.

As a voice pitched for the ear, it will  
roam and then fall, before we have a chance.  
For these fragments dangling from wooden  
beams are something to stare at.

We will not endure.  
You are thinking of it, of loving, of living in it.  
I follow you with my eyes, and your thoughts,  
I see them, shaping my imagination.