

chosen, and senseless of the choice, having made  
many cups of tea for the strangers, she sat  
and in her sitting made the stillness.

steam having wound its way up, peering at the edge  
of the lampshade, motioned itself slowly  
into shape, scraping luminosity

into a swirl of moist heat. they came to eat  
and left with bellies full of pride, riding  
to the universe on biscuits; she would know

only satisfaction, only hope, the scope of which  
was always such a burden for her to bear  
where bearing was a bringing into. two cups

beneath one lamp upon a table hardly able  
to hold such a sun, one of them empty  
but for a saucer bearing crumbs. some she knew

grew lowly, straightened their shoulders  
in praise raising questions still unanswered,  
catacombs beneath the tongue, hung with cones

and incense, instructed in the finer arts  
of lying. flying to dissipation steam  
will stream through windows, follow smoke,

joking with the currents currently underway,  
staying around monuments and spoons. soon  
she will answer, she will arouse, lift

her cup however empty the other and feel,  
as in feeling, that simple satisfaction  
fractioned and fractured, half forgotten,

gotten with a price, icily slide down the roof  
and shatter, mattering as it matters in a dream;  
as fragile as a cup of tea, a cup of steam.