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Goodbye Home. Hello Somewhere.

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GOODBYE HOME. HELLO SOMEWHERE.

1.

.... A time neither one is prepared for. The words have been spoken, and there is nothing more to be said. They have arrived at a place where what is broken can not be repaired; where what is lost can not be retrieved... The loss can be summarized in a word that constellates into a range of meanings: "home." As though standing there, they could watch it change, become abstract, *untenanted*. As though in its place the word "house" has appeared. And they can only stare at the alien letters, unsure of its spelling. Stare with growing apprehension, wondering what it could mean. And perhaps even further, more remote, more menacing—intimations of the unthinkable—if the word "shelter" should then occur to them. For once this arrives, even if it is still only peripheral, in the remote precincts of the mind, then the world, *their world*, can no longer be considered theirs.

2.

.... And how long before the arrival of increasingly separate, uncontrolled dreams? How long before they begin to receive news from a fractured world? A world that sends their way a procession, a "carnival" of masked, hooded figures. The loved one at last unmasked, revealed to be "demon" or "monster." But it is not only the hostile, wearying nights that have to be dealt with. There is also a succession of days into which various "intruders" may appear. Just there, on the familiar streets, a single, emblematic figure may confront them. It may be one who appears huddled and diminished against a blank, unforgiving wall. And this figure, as now seen, does not merely stand there, but makes a significant gesture: thrusting forward a bent, smudged white paper cup. A gesture that is both imploring and aggressive. And at this very moment the word "shelter" has advanced, adopting this specific form. It repeats, this time with a smeared, but believable human face.

3.

.... Moving now in separate orbits, each may enter their own version of an intolerable space, their own kind of "exile." Where there was "he and she," "you and I," now there is the one who does and the one who is done to. She for instance may begin studying the mirror, seeing there a face that reads: *the face of absence*. She may witness the transition from "home" to "house." Witness how a chair, a table, a lamp, can be stripped of its past, deprived of any future.... And what of him, what reaches him as the separation unfolds? He too, it seems, has entered a "questionable space." He finds himself reading into papers on a desk smiles and whispers of those he thought he knew, now suspect, possible conspirators.

4.

.... The terms of speech are now the terms of loss. It is a time of not quite grief, not quite anger. But with elements of both. All the familiar emotions may still be present, but somehow acquire different names. There may be a choice that involves merely changing partners. Or the beginning of a kind of "transformation." One or the other may ask: "Are we more visible when we have learned to see ourselves—one as each one, apart from the other? Parting one from the other, do we depart also from our reliance upon the mirror, the photograph?"

5.

.... After all this, after the goodbyes have been spoken, can another self, other selves, emerge? One that is prepared to say—even with a still tentative voice—"Hello somewhere"? Strange things affect the outcome. Forgotten things from yesterday, and from the earliest years. An inclination, a tendency, a predisposition, may turn out to be decisive.... The man may now feel himself drawn to a place dreamed about but never entered. Perhaps a small, single house on the edge of a forest.... The woman may find herself one morning standing before the figure huddled beside the wall. She may not know even a moment before what she really intends. She may be quite surprised, a few moments later, at why she reached into her purse, and placed whatever money her hand held into the white cup that was thrust forward toward her....