

## THE LOCATION OF THINGS

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Why from this window am I watching leaves?  
Why do halls and steps seem narrower?  
Why at this desk am I listening for the sound of the fall  
of color, the pitch of the wooden floor  
and feet going faster?  
Am I to understand change, whether remarkable  
or hidden, am I to find a lake under the table  
or a mountain beside my chair  
and will I know the minute water produces lilies  
or a family of mountaineers scales the peak?

### Recognitions

On Madison Avenue I am having a drink, someone  
with dark hair balances a carton on his shoulders  
and a painter enters the bar. It reminds me  
of pictures in restaurants, the exchange of hunger  
for thirst, art for decoration and in a hospital  
love for pain suffered beside the glistening rhododendron  
under the crucifix. The street, the street bears light  
and shade on its shoulders, walks without crying,  
turns itself into another and continues, even  
cantilevers this barroom atmosphere into a forest  
and sheds its leaves on my table  
carelessly as if it wanted to travel somewhere else  
and would like to get rid of its luggage  
which has become in this exquisite pointed rain  
a bunch of umbrellas. An exchange!

That head against the window  
how many times one has seen it. Afternoons  
of smoke and wet nostrils,  
the perilous makeup on her face and on his, numerous  
cortesges. The water's lace creates funerals it makes us  
see someone we love in an acre of grass.

The regard of dramatic afternoons

through this floodlit window  
or from a pontoon on this theatrical lake,  
you demand your old clown's paint and I hand you  
from my prompter's arms this shako,  
wandering as I am into clouds and air  
rushing into darkness as corridors  
who do not fear the melancholy of the stair.