

Donald Revell

The Mean Time

Your code, the reconciliation of each night
to what you've dreamed, defines you, sees you back
in a bedroom papered on three sides with brown flowers.
You can spin your little hats
on your fingers. You can wave. However you
prepare, each night recalls that room around
you faithfully and has you dream all those true
things covered with brown flowers, with your real name.

So many ideas of the same place, as of
a woman standing across from you, count more
than signs, more than signatures whose paraphs look
like small hats or flowers. They are a safe conduct.
They are lines drawn through you into the next
day's sad, uneasy adjustments for the sake
of all the gestures and details that will not
be reconciled to any lives but their own.

The way that one would shift herself to sleep
between two mirrors explains nothing. The shower
of glass another's face became once has not
turned up in a dream and has not changed. Your game
of clouds on wires is still dumb. These various,
constant minutiae recur just often
enough now. You'll keep the room. Your code,
because it keeps those lives inside of yours possible

and undisclosed, remains valid. Later on
tonight, as if a dated, familiar band
had tipped their hats and begun playing, you
will remember all the ways you've learned to move
from name to name, from any room to one
room filled with brown flowers. Every way is yourself
as it has had to be at a given time,
between mirrors, or beneath a shower of glass.