

THE KNOWN WORLD

*Did you kiss the dead body*

HAROLD PINTER

there is so much I want to tell you  
*a leaf shrinks into almost nothing and that relief*

the dislocation, the distraction  
*no one knows the cause*

words are spoken over the bodies  
*a few voices, a passing car*

an exceptional despair moves over the known world  
*a cratered marketplace*

birds escape from what escapes us  
*I look back and am afraid*

I try to think but cannot stay awake  
*we disappear into our lives*

a scene remains as the camera turns away  
*how many times can a thing be spent and not exhausted?*

## DROUGHT

You walk without favor  
where many have gone before.

In light too bright for you  
clouds thin

While images of earth  
are not those of a mother  
as we want a mother.

The sun lags  
on its routine errand.

Will you take the dust  
in your arms  
as once you did damp grass?

Don't think  
anymore of what it is you want.

A nobility at certain impasses  
may have no witness.

Dust cloaks you  
as it does a rabbit.

## OUTLOOK

Days, slaves to the sun,  
the sun herds them into shadows.

A valley fills with traveled light  
and snowmelt.

A remnant of the flood is our distress,  
willful and babyish sometimes.

If you mention the plight of anything,  
add to that the relief of music.

Cow-vetch, hot-house roses, dogs  
that maul light in fields: a race is on.

I seem to catch the drift of a mistake.  
A is for apple, asthma, anarchic love.

Why do you run and hide?  
Kilimanjaro is snowcapped in a book.

An epic, a romance—  
nothing rhymes at the window.

## DEER

In hard winters deer starve.  
A ribcage collapses under snow.

In summer the deer show themselves more.  
They step aside  
to clear our passage through scrub birch.

They can be seen at rest sometimes,  
standing in the amber dusk  
where the meadow  
meets the deep green woods.

At the tag-end of August  
they enter barns for hay. They are luck to us.

But what time is it? Do you have a minute?  
Deer are in the thicket . . .

I follow pointed hoof prints in damp sand.  
A deer has been where you have gone.

It left signs, small marks  
of spirit in March thaws. Never mind

that you didn't see them,  
you've seen other things:  
wood-smoke, burst apples, the steam  
  
of something stammered in the cold.