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translation

for Shariputra and Spicer

in the sour milk of your day
with letters sent
and little girls dead
in jasmine amidst bulls—
endlessly running bulls—
in your delicate, tight-fisted verse
this mean time after the poem
you wait in silence maybe
spent with a bad habit.
no word echoes, yet
with refilled glass, you take
rush hour messages
all business and all bullshit
as needy as the early
language just waking
to your presence
eavesdropping on the dead
o Jack, there is no difference
between you and your yen
no sound, image, lyric
no ugliness, beauty, syllable
no dawn, dusk, jew, negro
no ballad, no san francisco, no touchdown