

***H.L. Hix***

**How do we move from this limitless condition to responsible action?**

(Annika Thiem)

For principles, these five. Never  
(for no nakedness, not to bathe, not to taste  
of my lover her salt and savor),  
never remove from my waist  
this sisal, tied around it by my mother,  
that hides me from all malicious spirits.  
Drink neither wine nor water  
without the spill that quenches ancestors' thirst.  
Always chant, offering chaff  
(praise Breeze; do not name Calm, do not name Gust).  
At solstice, climb high enough  
to see this season's snow in last season's nest.  
With my own knife, on myself,  
incise in glyphs my history of secrets.

**Is there a way to wake up?**

(Jena Osman)

I was supposed to know them, the couple  
you named, alerting me they'd gone missing.  
(This dream dimmed what all my dreams dim: trouble.  
We never bloomed, but we keep dehiscing.)  
I was at work, in a meeting, a small,  
hot, crowded room. You broke in, insisted  
I help. (Though we were speaking not at all.  
We never stood, never fell, just listed.)  
I was not I, nor you you. (*This* the dream  
lifted from my life: what *feels* fraught *is* fraught.  
And this: I saw your halt and raised you lame.)  
By us, the lost, are the missing best sought,  
so we left together to look for them,  
the couple I should have known but did not.

H.L. Hix

**What might it mean to think that I am absent from or to my own experience?**

(Veena Das)

I can't quite catch my breath. Here,  
because at this altitude, no one can,  
or in such cold. Any more,  
because I am older already than  
they ever were, my father  
or his or his. Always it was sudden,  
the end, though their giving over  
had been steady, like this my giving in.  
Which counts as their forfeiture,  
that collapse, or the deterioration?  
They couldn't catch their breath, either.  
Like father, like son: fall, falling, fallen.  
Here just *is* I know not where  
now that I'm older than he was when.

**What would it mean — and what would it take — to end metaphysics?**

(Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht)

I could be anywhere, in this world  
or in whatever distant other,  
but for the call of I know not what bird,  
the same two notes over and over,  
the second pitch lower by a third  
than the first, no element, neither  
the calls nor the time between them, varied.  
The same, the same, for more than an hour.  
But that I awoke at your side.  
That, though I cannot *see* you or *hear*  
through the wall, I still feel you, in bed  
in the next room. That soon you will stir.  
I'll bring you coffee, hear what you dreamed.  
Meanwhile, this dawn. That bird. You. Now. Here.