Difficult

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It is difficult to choose the reader for this poem.
I have left its windows open
so you might as well climb inside
where you can be safe for now from weather,
and though you’re already feeling intrusive
think of yourself as a museum visitor
to a reconstruction of a life now silenced.
The bed, I know, has not been made
but the silver cutlery on the formal dining table is meticulous.
You will not be roped out of any room
and you can be confident
the writer left before you and your party arrived.
The place is left as realistic as anything you might write yourself.
Dirty clothes (for instance) are piled into a predictable straw basket,
their odour not quite animal or human,
though the stiffening socks were plainly meant for feet.
It’s difficult to choose a reader for a poem
when its reader must be imagined
if you are to exist at all just now.
Parents too are difficult to choose
though they’re chosen all the same.
The plain truth is the bricks outside are wet with rain
and now you find yourself inside
the couch is sprinkled with the drops that just blew in with you
through the curtains of the open window.
Sounds of possums in the poem’s ceiling must distract you,
a blackbird in the yard outside is startlingly alive,
the cat inside will stay asleep despite your tread,
and a green bin steaming with the evidence of wasteful lives
in a corner of the kitchen is what you’ve come to expect from art.
The lived-in emptiness of every room
makes it difficult to choose a reader for this poem.
No meal has been prepared and no money has been left
in an envelope with your name on it.
The vases are all empty.
A man has written this you must suspect.
The blue sky presses down on us its single thought.
A green and oily ocean’s creeping closer every century
and an ochre desert lies less than three thousand kilometres away.
It is difficult to know what is the greatest threat to this poem:
reader, silence, landscape, weather or its absent occupant.