**Fear**

1.

fear is in the belly

the grip of an unforgiving hand

squeezing the entrails

trying to push you out of yourself

fear is in the brain

the clouds that wrap the hippocampus

in a night always waiting

to push back the dawn

fear is in the chest

the weight of an ocean

crushing air from the lungs

an iron fist around the heart

2.

two fears live in me

lodged in my soul

like a virus in the spine:

herpes of the mind

a darkened box

sets fire the medulla

in my reptilian core

i know how a lizard feels in a concrete hole

the other

binds me to the intangible

i am a victim of nothing

a sensual, palpable, nothing

3.

my death

doesn’t disturb me

a short passage from here to not

how could i care?

i could flee from life.

find a desert island

a last remnant, final

a dot on the barren horizon

but my island is here

between chair and table

i serve myself dinner

reheat coffee

4.

i was king for ten minutes

and no one knew but me

i was a pauper without a song

and the crowds closed around me

for a brief time

all the flags were pointing

saying here’s the guy

he has a voice, you know

the wind has long since changed

i’m back in my chair

still, ten invisible minutes

is better than leftovers

5.

ok, i woke up this morning

chose a head for the day

actually, it chose me

but that’s a cliché, and i was avoiding it

this head is uncombed, unshaven

that’s good enough, i don’t

look at myself in mirrors

why bring up issues?

the sleeping dog

at the foot of the stairs

bit me on the ass yesterday

today i step over without waking him

6.

fear is in the hands

you raise them to your face

sacrificing touch for vision

turning away bullets with chips of bone

fear is in the eyes

tight shut

against the brightness

that is the fire you loathe

fear is in the gonads

the organs that cannot abide

the 10 000 nights

i spend alone

7.

fear is in the mind

the future, stretching out unending