

VOICES

In darkness
or aloneness with telephone or radio,
voices can touch, something can connect
through human sound that doesn't happen
between flesh. Maybe nearness
gets in the way. The notions our faces foster.

I never liked Aunt Clara, the why unsure,
defenseless. If you forced an explanation,
I'd shrug and mention her vapid smile,
the way she held her teacup.
I used to want to put eyebrow pencil on her,
creating some trace of expression.

In the still vastness of unannounced daybreak,
voices hold a different tone,
changing with distance, not the same
when you can't see the lips. Sometimes
you think a voice on the wire or across
the hall is not the person claiming it.
And even if it's saying the expected,
a whole new set of sensors takes the message.

I'll always regret not being far enough away
to hear Aunt Clara's call for help.