

Having to be so without having to be so, I take my seat at the bar.  
It's my manner. I'm willful. Absent. Crisp. And cold. I know

where to point my eyes when speaking, when listening, when  
the check arrives. I'm having lunch today because

I'm pretty civilized. When I ride the train, I curve  
when it curves, and I stop when it rests—after I take a sip, I pause

to take a breath. Here is my theme. I'm late for this. I'm late  
for that. I'll ask you to move back

from the billiard table while I take my shot. I hold the cue with  
my fingers though my fingers flop. This is

the sweet season. These are salad days. I walk  
into the diner, into the park, out onto the rocks above the lake in love

with my blue t-shirt, my blue jeans, my watch and my cologne.  
I'm happy to talk with you, and I'm happy to be alone.

I find my legs cross at the ankles as I sit in a row  
as if with others in a hallway stretching over and out of

corners with empty classrooms, water fountains, lights  
dimming off their sensors—I'm all "after school"

and up to chat as I lay my hands flat to the tiles and look  
from side to side in a sequence

of nods and smiles. As often as I like, I get away from myself  
toward the talk I'm into, conversations after

the thing, breezing on my daily vacations, unoccupied  
in extra time. Come back, come back. The watch on my hand

has no strap. I'm adult, I'm outside, and if it's  
a fault, I mean, then the fault is mine. This is how I've dared

all afternoon on the stone steps below the tree  
filled with blossoms and bees, waiting for someone who looks like

me, after he's casually gone absent from the meeting  
room, out for a twirl past my stoop—for me

there's something moored to this business  
not through—the sun on our skin and everything due.