

Aubade

Light brushes the white weatherboards
some unclaimed border of purple and pink,
strokes the windmills churning early air on the hills.
There are fifty-five turbines. In a bag, an apple
picked in an orchard seven kilometres from here,
placed on a shelf at a market garden. The woman who took the apple
from that shelf, who inspected it for bruises, found one, then bought it anyway,
would see the same light, standing in the same kitchen. Instead, she stares
at her hands, less like hers than her mother's, the first time
she has thought of her mother today, though not the last, it's early yet.
Early light, the earliest it can be and still be called light.
All the risks of the day stand between you and the next time you see this colour.
The light that slips through the glass of her window reveals a web
of lines in her hands, palm up before her as in supplication.
To whom? The kettle boils. 1.65 megawatts per windmill,
enough to power 700 homes. She was trying to tell you
something. Your wife. Though no turbine may exceed
forty decibels. It is that time of year, the whole of the working day
visible, leave with first light, return with the last, this time
will hardly last at all. Bigger close up, each seventy meters. It helps
she has things to do with her hands, that this moment
of self-reflection is circumscribed by the rattling she hears upstairs, children.
You see the day as a kind of wind. It will recede, leave you standing. One
of the weatherboards is rotten. Each has three blades. Nearly twelve
hours since you last spoke, half of that in difficult sleep,
the rest in the language only a stunned silence makes,
scrape of drawer, hard complaint of dishes, the refrigerator's hum
forty-three decibels. Speech, if not absent, would be forty-five.
There are things information cannot tend.
There are things said that will take a long time to fade
as the colour fades now against the house, whitening, the clamped teeth
of the day. The sun rising. Someone will pick hundreds

of apples today. Rain will engorge the valley. Some neighbours
complain about the noise. Your wife was trying to say something to you.
Forty decibels. The windmills whip and whip. You haven't heard a thing.

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