

Notes for a Son, 19, Living Abroad

Dixie Lee Partridge

Often when entering sleep
I start awake, your form having drifted
into vision, your name embedded
in the thickness of my tongue.
Recurring dreams move me through foreign streets
where I spot you in alleyways
and turn back to find you.

Sleep becomes a hard labor
toward things unsettled between us,
until what we never did
becomes more real than what happened.
I tell no one that each morning
my body has more weight, enters stark light
moving with the terrible caution
of the infirm, walks through the day's tasks
expecting my hands to move through
the cup or the desk-top
as though they were dreamed there.

At last a routine in your absence
takes hold; things seem solid again
in their places.
But the house tries to resurrect
more of your presence.
The piano stays tuned
for the classic and ragtime fortissimo
of your style.

To telephone voices that inquire
for you, I want to explain both
that you are gone, and that something of you
remains, waits for your body light
to enliven what's real
and make it whole.