

M

The Berkshire hills the book that opens
again with each curve where the woods take back
what they just said ditch lilies ditch lilies
open orange eager in the Berkshires the mills
are no longer milling paper milling wool
they're milling memories of themselves
as useful they mill this skein of highway clumps
of lilies woolly thoughts the letter M its hieroglyph
a set of Mediterranean waves and the Phoenicians
who drew M first ship-makers wave-walkers
consider them first looking out then in the mills
are milling the Housatonic river it skims
a thousand rocks is almost close enough to touch all
landscape here is intimate hemmed in a book
close to the face not *an open book* as we say
more the way a baby sees from its mother's breast
to her face and that is all an open book is
one small room its talk a little talk its form
reinforcement of five hundred years of private
thought along with the invention of the separate
room a sudden set of separate fires the ancient
Berkshire hills their mills are milling spotted
dairy cows and woolly sheep alphabet of camels
oxen fish if my northern tribe had drawn M first
M would have been a hieroglyph for *milk* the cows
goats sheep they learned to drink from or starve
la mer, la mère the sound of M for *mother*
in nearly every language the early sounds a baby
makes M for delicious the motor's hum delicious
drowsing off the shape of these worn-down hills the mills
mill poems walls of stone tonight they mill the stars
M for *ma*, the Japanese idea of space
and silence as a thing not absence on the radio
today they talk about the death of books
of spacious thought the book a footnote
a single clump of lilies one river thread
I think of books as milk from other animals

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