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Arthur Russell

The Fence of My Indifference

When your difficulties jump the fence of my indifference,
and I awaken to thoughts of you in dirty bedclothes;
when I look at my fork of food and cannot eat it,

and draw ballpoint hash marks on the breakfast paper,
and say your name out loud in the shower,
and later pull weeds as if to clear a landing place for you,

but you don't come, I recall how we ran down the ramp
to the lower level of Grand Central, and I drew your shadow
in pencil on the whispering wall, but none of that reaches you.

Today, I write the word "hand," and a hand grows from the paper.
I draw a picture of a hand, and a hand rises from my shading.
I say the word "hand," and my hand comes down on your shoulder

in the hospital room, and you turn from your silence to see that
I have jumped the fence of my indifference into your difficulties.