The Hare and the Tortoise

The way I keep trying to write this poem, plodding into words. First I had a daughter, then a son. I got married very young, I stood at the top of the stair, smoking a cigarette, watching the sun go down, the frantic starlings. This was the beginning of what I think of as grief, my second life poised, ready to dash off. I wanted to mourn for Jack Kennedy, for my blue Volkswagen, I wanted to live in a nicely decorated house, but I kept on. This isn’t the story of a housewife dusting the mantle. It’s about the stubborn drive I have, and you, too. You’re a strange fellow, stretching your neck into the inevitable world. The subject jumps ahead and leaves you trudging along, excitement quickly wilting. Down the road, the troubled wind, the imprecise laws of science. You pick your way over debris. You don’t exactly label what you touch. You register it with a deliberateness that is more like memory, only always for the first time. You don’t want to get lost. You hope for an answer. You believe you have a mate who is far out front, but who may hit a lull. Then you quit being interested in a subject. You just want to get through this with honor. The subject has disappeared into the meter of your legs, the heat of the walk. Even the old problem of religion has dissolved into walking.

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