

*The Party at Elaine's*

“I saw you at Elaine’s”  
he said  
“I hope that’s right”

I let it go  
    as you might  
    a loose comment  
        of any sort

Ravens flew by  
    in the distance  
in the western part of  
    the evening

It was  
an  
apologetic gesture

we could have been talking  
about  
most anything  
    and it would  
    not have mattered

after awhile  
we shook hands  
    and said goodnight

He wanted to know Elaine  
and  
I knew her  
    only slightly  
She had these

parties you went to  
on 51<sup>st</sup> St.  
where the numbers  
go up and down  
in different ways  
from one avenue to the next  
and there are trees  
in plots  
between cement spaces

It was like one of those  
salons  
in Paris  
where they  
sneer  
at the latest  
impressionist exhibit  
or something

You went up  
these  
thickly carpeted stairs  
three or four flights  
I think it was  
and the door opens  
in a blast of talk  
loud conversations  
are going on  
you can't hear a thing

lots of wine  
and cheese & crackers  
that's it  
no one says hello  
so after awhile

you leave

On the way down  
you're  
bound to meet someone  
on the stairs  
and chat  
and even  
climb back up  
to the party  
if it's interesting

I saw him again  
a few days later  
at a café  
and again  
he made hints  
about meeting Elaine  
and  
I had to explain  
to him  
I really didn't know her  
could he  
learn to  
leave me alone  
but he  
bought me a coffee  
and we sat  
and talked for awhile  
"So you don't  
know her at all"  
he asked?

I'd like to  
know her better

I said  
She's very beautiful  
Elaine is hard to describe  
because  
she contains herself so well  
tall, a nice figure  
long dark hair

it's her sense of humor  
It's suddenly  
on the surface  
and exposed  
and it makes you feel  
included  
and interesting  
That she might like you  
means  
that you're  
worth liking  
and she looks  
foreword  
to seeing you again

her humor is honest  
and bursting out  
and you want to  
experience more of that  
like a good wine

"But it's always the same"  
I tell him  
"you run into one another  
in the café  
and she's delighted  
but already late

and so on

you could just as easily  
disappear  
and never be heard from  
again

it's alright  
I guess  
Life is short  
and there's a lot to do"