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 51st 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”