

ANNE COOMBS

THE WRITER

In the space that was her head the world went on.
In the whirring of her brain and the plotting on the page
the past was recreated, rearranged;
old pains cauterized, old fears faced.
And outside life went on without her.

I look upon that "garrett" from my distance:
Surrounded by country air, I think of city grime.
I listen to the plovers in the eaves,
the currawongs calling from the willow.
I listen to the silence and the ticking of the clock.

It is a distance more than miles,
a distance no telephone can cross.
It is the space between skipper and stowaway;
in the same place, but one legitimate, the other not —
unwanted cargo on a solo passage.

Now, a reluctant stowaway who wants to leave the boat,
who wants a life more than of the mind:
For I believed in a solid form behind the shadows,
I thought her surer vision could clarify the lines,
I believed when she said life meant more than art.

But she lied. I watch her making real what has passed,
I watch her loving those she no longer has.
Listening, I nod sagely at the reasons that she gives;
unseen, I follow the solo passage,
an unloved companion in an incidental life.

Maitland, Dec 21, 86

