

Study

(for Dimitris Tsaloumas)

You know, I was almost about to forgo
these lines, for fear of smudging the page
with tricky ointment. I put it on sometimes,
this late at night (it's twenty-five
past one): next morning the glaze is gone, silent
as good intentions. This time though,
with the taste of your fish and cabbage biting my tongue,
I turned and succumbed, found for the pen
to record the way you found for Brahms and substance,
and the music-stand on the way to the door
said Bach. The purest poetry, we agreed -
meaning music - and as I turned
the key the car announced a song that no longer
matters. Perhaps next time, my friend,
I'll drop in unannounced, bearing some songs
of my own to offer you,
some salve to smudge the difficult season with.