that will we say to each other in this room a dream of a common language spelt out in my head the days will run together and stream into years as the rivers freeze and burn and ask myself and you which of our visions will claim us which will we claim how will we go on living without confronting the whiteness of this room and of each other conceived each other in a darkness which I remember as drenched in light I want to call this life but I can't call it life until we start to move beyond this circle where our bodies are giant shadows flung on a wall where the night becomes our inner darkness and sleeps like a dumb beast on her paws in the corner we are holding hands so I can see everything I follow you into your dreams your past the places none of us can explain to anyone silence can plan rigorously executed the blueprint to a life it is a presence it has a history a form do not confuse it with any kind of absence if there were a poetry where this could happen not as blank space of words stretched like a skin over meanings but as silence falls at the end of a night through which people have talked till dawn the scream how do I exist a conversation begins with a lie and each speaker of the so-called common language feels the ice-floe split the drift apart as ifpurpose as if up against the force of nature a poem can begin with a lie and be torn up language floats to the vanishing point to wake from drowning into this common acute particularity a scream of some unknown eaten up far down in the street causing each of us to listen to her own inward scream knowing the kind of the mugger and the mugged as any woman must who stands to survive this century this life in this room there is vision and betrayal be