Mrs. Ramsay's Knee

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1. THE MOWER

Saturday morning, the neighbor boy comes too early for his money. The doorbell’s rung. We wake remembering the green bills ready on the table, the mower’s pattern in the grass, the swimming heat of yesterday’s sun. When night dew warms, humid air is not so heavy. We’re breathing as though we still slept, our bodies bent toward each other. The flowered sheets we’ve pushed off. Nothing’s more comfortable than this. Imagine the blonde boy on the doorstep, tightly wound in his sneakers, trying to look cool through the peephole. His mother is frying bacon; his father is shaving. He figures we’re in the shower, the kitchen radio’s too loud. Outside we know the grass smells fresh as laundry from the dryer. Inside we begin to move again.

2. TRIO

Tonight I listen to Mozart measure his mind across the harpsichord and then the flute sings, a bird tipping the topmost bough, whistling a sure note, the slow cello coming under like a warm wind stroking the shining feathers at the throat, shaking the lightest leaves of the silver maple. All is transformed to pleasure and harmony, endless and transmutable, a form compacted of the human mind and heart. I imagine you at home far away from me, listening to Mozart or the whistling of your kettle, making tea, or stroking your thin cat, settling down to your night’s work: a lapful of student papers, ciphers you put your mind to, seeking clarity in a mind’s fresh chaos, a flash of winter light in the tree.