Darkness is a fast-growing ivy. It spreads. Watered with wisdom collected from the day, a drape of darkness draws across your eyes smoothly. Darkness may obscure your vision, but it uncovers tactile memories from the morning.

I had promised myself that morning: I will not touch the door handles of cars. Door handles can surprise you, out of nowhere, with an electrostatic shock. You can feel the electrostatic memory; it moves across the day, even when there isn’t any car to look at. Darkness enhances the tactile memory of a metallic door handle.

Although it is still half-dark, you have the assurance that it will soon be completely dark. But you do not yet require electric lights.

The walls look half-relieved to be able to let go of the light that floats down the window, half-sad to let the light fade. Half-lonely windows wait to grow dark around their frames and glass. Reflections will dissolve. There will be nothing waiting outside to look at other than a solitary lamp post. The world of elsewhere fades around the movements within the clock. And at any moment you may actually begin to see clearly glimpses from the day while memorizing the touch of metal on skin. Even the
memory of electrostatic touch continues to surprise you. But you may have a ritual to complete by recollecting all those memorable tactile sensitivities you can remember while darkness is semi-lit. Perhaps you may also possess a tactile album where you can see those sensations.

The story of a ritual is a story without a gradual logic.

It is just an ordinary ritual — my staring at darkness — probably grown out of an average idle evening. Certainly something I wouldn’t forget performing. I know my neighbor will perform his ritual of going out with his dog, because no one will discover him not picking up after that dog. We all have different rituals linked to half-darkness.

Piled thoughts, messy conclusions of events that one can think about from the day, those meandering streams of ideas over rough and smooth ground inside the world called mind and carrying many washed-away details; regrets and triumphs, their knotted-up mingling can be filtered from a lingering smell of gasoline from that morning’s wait at a gas station. All the rest dissolves in a liquid darkness around the clock. Light will be dead; but the throbbing through air will thrive — glimpses from day in the sensation of touch and smell. I like watching dogs, but I would prefer them to smell of magazine pages if they come near me. I prefer them to be smooth as magazine pages when I touch them. I prefer them to be folded and put away when they bark.

Even half a memory of touch can have a voice when colors confuse around the eyes at dusk. A tactile language evolves in its recollection. Recollections move in bones and skin if one has tactile insecurities. When tactile recollections become too sensitive, I turn to a visual memory.
Once, in broad daylight, I watched a monkey in Banga-lore — a puzzled look in his eyes — staring at a mirror he was holding with both hands. I do not know how he had acquired it. Probably unsure of what he saw, he held it focused on the sun, its light reflected upon his face while he continued experimenting, studying, evolving. Was there half a question in his mind? Did the question arise as language? The monkey did not even make a sound! It was quietly studying the mirror.

Then noise came to break that silent concentration, like water filling up a void and emptying out the air. Other monkeys came to have a look. They each proceeded to claim the mirror with disorganized screeches and a ruck-us — what an argumentative debacle! Their monkey language filled the stillness. Perhaps the half-question dissolved in the din. What happened to the mirror? I don’t know; I didn’t see the end. The end could have been a shattering sound: the mirror breaking, spoiling the question. Pieces of the sun under the sky.

Darkness spreads as quickly as ivy, revealing the sound of the monkeys’ chatter. The half-darkness echoes all the distant questions that could only be half-answered. Broken moments, piece by piece, join to build up a structure under the eroding light. Did that monkey remember half of its question?

Does anyone know how to join up the jigsaw pieces of Autism and see the overall picture? Or does the real picture erode behind the emphasis of those singled-out blue and solitary puzzle pieces? They taught you to see the pieces and not the picture.

The erosion of thoughts with forgetfulness, floating and shifting around remembered voices, words drizzling, sounds rushing through ravines — conclusions knock as
shifting boulders beneath the surface and the trickling sonorous darkness. Everything becomes clear when darkness is still half. You remember your half-looking, half-forgetting to look. You remember looking at someone’s shadow when light is half-eroded.

Every time you forget how you must remember his shadow, his shoes, and the stitched folds on his trousers, you forget what he was talking about. Did you actually hear his words or did they fade away like those dreams that you tried to remember? I had isolated his voice from his words. You remember more than half about that shadow. You remember it was hot. A hundred half-thoughts begin, then bubble and pop with a distraction. A half-moon probably waits outside the window. You may see that half a piece of that moon and ignore the darker half. But it will pull the tide all the same.

Unseen chatter of insects thickens as darkness proceeds to win over the other half; each insect loudly alone. You must filter a lingering smell of gasoline out from your memory and concentrate on how effortless loneliness can be.

Often two thoughts appear like actors entering the stage, when darkness is as split as broken thoughts only one personality can emerge at a time. You wait but you can’t understand what the actors are supposed to say. Then you begin to actually see “silence” as half-understanding, aggressive enough to cover up all the insect sounds. Darkness is an absolute stage to look into the eyes of silence. All the ticking of time turns out to be absurd movements. The script of muteness is deeper than words. It bears all those incomplete monkey questions. Soon, a solved puzzle picture and unsolved puzzled pieces will look the same.
Darkness grows by half. Sky fades, distance dissolves. It’s time to feed on the other senses with visual understanding.

Half-darkness is a half-filled plate of visual gratification.