

A soul is something we have every now and then.
Nobody has one all the time
or forever.

Day after day,
year after year,
can go by without one.

Only sometimes in rapture
or in the fears of childhood
it nests a little longer.
Only sometimes in the wonderment
that we are old.

It rarely assists us
during tiresome tasks,
such as moving furniture,
carrying suitcases,
or traveling on foot in shoes too tight.

When we're filling out questionnaires
or chopping meat
it's usually given time off.

Out of our thousand conversations
it participates in one,
and even that isn't a given,
for it prefers silence.

When the body starts to ache and ache
it quietly steals from its post.

It's choosy:
not happy to see us in crowds,
sickened by our struggle for any old advantage
and the drone of business dealings.

It doesn't see joy and sorrow
as two different feelings.
It is with us
only in their union.
We can count on it
when we're not sure of anything
and curious about everything.

Of all material objects
it likes grandfather clocks
and mirrors, which work diligently
even when no one is looking.

It doesn't state where it comes from
or when it will vanish again,
but clearly it awaits such questions.

Evidently,
just as we need it,
it can also use us
for something.