MADISON, MONK, AND THE OPPOSITION PARTY

There is an inherited dispute no one disputes.

Even if it’s a fable—we agree to disagree.

There was once enough agreement about disagreement to agree.

In school I pored over James Madison and Thelonious Monk.

Both Madison and Monk understood essential tension:

the shapes of X and N and O;  the harmony of mutual frustration.

And others even more. And more yet will.

This: how I came to speak for myself.

Now I stand among the rocks. The rocks are stony and proud in their way.

Dented and mute (or mostly mute). Sometimes saying things: Hold me—and go. And hold me, and stay. So I go;

or hold on for as long as I can.

The rocks are never obvious, though seem so; this: their appeal.

We take photographs, but they start to slide out of the picture.

As the page and the slanting handwriting there is always more than its texture.

The day passes. The rocks remain. For the moment, lunch makes a difference.

Monk is mute and Madison is voluble on factions; I listen to them both.

I write this out on an oak table; someone made it.

It is a plank I use for eating, talk, collage—

the table’s only a small part of what I write, but I cannot circle back
to it now. That work is done—now: our turn.

*NOW* is the thing that no one is doubting. The rocks are another thing.

Nobody seems to want them, but they may be the only thing.

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