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John Ashbery

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## Farm III

Small waves strike The dark stones. The wife reads The letter. There is nothing irreversible: Points to the last sibilants Of invading beef and calico.

Pretty soon oil has Taken up the place of The dark around you. It was all As told, but anyway it never came out just right: A fraction here, a lisp where it didn't matter. It has to be presented Through a final gap: pear trees and flowers An ultimate resinous wall Basking in the temperate climate Of your identity. Sullen fecundity To be watched over.

## **Oleum Misericordiae**

To rub it out, make it less virulent And a stab too at rearranging The whole thing from the ground up. Yes we were waiting just now Yes we are no longer waiting.

Afterwards when I tell you It's as though it all only happened As siding of my story

I beg you to listen You are already listening

It has shut itself out And in doing so shut us accidentally in

And meanwhile my story goes well The first chapter

endeth

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