

IF, THEN

If the men from town call in the crux of night,
then they are calling to misinform you.

If they say *come quick your brother's in jail*,
then that's not what they mean.

If you go to town but your brother's not in jail,
then this time he cannot be saved.

If your brother cannot be sprung from a cage,
then he couldn't have been saved anyways.

If the men from town call in the crux of night,
then it's not because of *that* but *this*:

death. If the men from town have to lie,
then they tell a nebulous lie. Detained's less direct than

dead. If you must think about the body,
then you cannot let it get to you. Remember:

if your brother or anyone's brother could've been saved
then he would've been saved but if,

if a man falls into the machine at the quarry,
then that machine gets full-mouthed with power &

if a man looks back up at life from the machine,
then he's still headed down to death. It's just that

if life's hand won't reach out into someplace,
then death's hand will & you,

if you cannot forget what you saw in the morgue,
then it's not your fault, it's death's—

not too modest to put its hand on your back,
tell you where the comfort's at, go:

the mind is a rogue machine. If humane then inhumane.
The nebulous night reaches in.