The Soft, Supple, and Delicate are Disciples of Life
Jeremy Schliewe

I believe in god half of the time and love at least three-fourths.
I've sharpened my anger in the past and pointed so many impotent fingers.
I've sought answers in the political and unobtainable ideological, but no longer.
I want to stare at life through the eyes of an idiot child, as if it were the circus parading through the town, all clowns and elephants, balloons and banners.
Sometimes I walk and imperceptibly my matter disperses, loosens, and mingles with the cool night air.
And I see everybody else walking around (almost nobody like me, friendly eyes are few, everyone is hurried, busy.)
(Like the heavy one trudging on alone, I know that he is probably not happy, discouraged by the way his pants fit him, held up only by a leather belt and a prayer.)
Suffering is salient, but it drives us apart rather than draws us together.

Ausable Hall
Ira Socol

Anthony is now officially panicked. He stands rigidly, back against the wall, staring at two classroom doors across from him. He glances at his watch, but, as is too often the case, the squiggles of numeric characters mean nothing to him. He could be late, but he has no way of knowing.

The crucifix on the chain around his neck is jammed between his teeth, a guard, he imagines, against some kind of seizure he has never had. Or no, perhaps what matters here is that it penetrates his lips like a mother's nipple, warm and comforting and consoling, if he could comprehend that about his mother.

He raises the index cards in his right hand so that they fall into his field of vision. His cue cards. Written references to match with classroom numbers. A lesson from his special ed counselor in tenth grade. His vision though, is no longer just reversing and scrambling images, it is becoming less precise by the second, and is no more valid than the plastic lens of a discount store brand of throw-away camera. He should be able to match the symbols on his card to the numbers above at least one of the doors across from him or one of the doors on this floor anyway, but now, after running across the campus, after trying to find a building, after being lost in the serpentine hallways of this... Is this even the right building? He can not remember whether he saw or read a sign, nor whether he saw or read it correctly. Just like he cannot make sense of any of those Arabic symbols before him that might allow him to enter his course.

Day one, he acknowledges. Just one class been to and already behind. Cannot read fast enough to ever catch up. Cannot even find my way. Lost, stupid. How did I ever graduate from high school anyway? Go to college? What an idiot.

Anthony sits down in the corridor. Does not ask. Does not cry. Does not know how to find his way back to that other building to quit.