



A Woman Going Blind

She sat there like the others with their tea.
It seemed to me, as if she held her cup
slightly differently than the others.
She laughed once. It was almost painful.

And when they finally stood up and spoke
and slowly walked as Chance would have it
through the many rooms (one spoke and laughed),
there I saw her. She went behind the others

in the manner of one who must shortly
sing and that for a large group of people;
upon her bright eyes, full of happiness,
fell light from outside as if on a pool.

She followed slowly and she took a long time
as if something were still left to transcend;
and yet: as if, after the transition,
she would no longer walk, but fly.

Rainer Maria Rilke
from *New Poems*
(tr. Cliff Crego)