

Reflect

I'm that guy—
the guy always looking
in mirrors
who walks by a big
plate glass window
glances over
I might walk by again
to glance another time

I'm embarrassed by it
I think they see me
looking at myself
think I'm vain
think I'm narcissistic

I'm insecure
It feels odd
paying attention to yourself
to your appearance
but I've always been that guy
who has a bunch of hats
different coats, costumes

I tell people it's because
I'm in theatre
that's why I collect all these
coats and hats and props
but really, I think
it's because
I'm still not sure
who I am.

I look in the mirror
and I'm really not sure.

I'm with me all the time—
and "familiarity breeds contempt"
but I'm not contemptuous
looking at my face

in the mirror in the morning
or whenever,
it just doesn't seem real.

There's a distance between me
And that guy I see,
though I know
where all his moles are,
where his hair has gone gray,
why his beard is trimmed like that,
longer on that one part
than on the other,
because I missed a spot.

I understand why his shirt
has those stains
I spilled soup there
I see all of that
but like I'm looking
at a deep-fake

How do I connect
what I see
with this voice,
this consciousness?
How do I know if I'm
telling him things,
or he's telling me?

Who else is conscious?
My dogs—
self-conscious, self-aware—
do they think of themselves
as particular beings?
Do they have a sense
of their own personalities?

Or do they just engage
whatever's on the outside
responding to instincts
that drive them?

I do smile in my mirror,

WHERE THE GROWTH BEGINS

it would be rude
not to,
but really, he feels
so lost.