**Pop Quiz**

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Some bow their heads and wait for their pens to move.

A ground cloud, like a fog, or an unexpected tide, pulls

them away. Through the haze, the quiet one half-raises her

hand, asks if—*after today*—there will be *other chances*.

Today’s exam, I want to tell her, is not today’s exam.

It is *Everyman*’s call, nothing in stone; a practice run

at squaring accounts; at facing what we did not plan;

at being alone; a reference to the clock on our wall,

whose hands advance with or without us. As I wait for

them in the dim, rapt hush, a curtain rises. Scenes—like

a showreel—flicker and flash: a hand untangling from a lover’s

grasp; a slap for a ranting three-year old; a prayer clasp. As if

to find answers, some raise their heads, gaze at a life scene

outside: A yellow-breasted blackbird on a branch, savoring

a grub in its beak. *Other chances*. Such a sweet ring.

Winter’s buried bulbs; bloom in the next growing season.