

Two Poems

by [Paul Illidge](#) (April 2021)



Crouching Nude, Francis Bacon, 1951

A Room in Zürich

for M.G.

No going to
or coming from.
Just here. Me. Alone.

I listen for sound
but all is silent as
a ghost mouth
full of darkness.

Quiet I stay
hour after hour listening
to myself listen
like a blind man does
for the sound of lips—
when something explodes.

A telephone ringing off the hook.
Panicked shouting outside my door.
Glass breaking. Screams.

Cornered by moonlight
I stay crouched down.
Still. Listening as the shouting
tears down the hall.
Down the stairs.
Slamming behind.

With me, well, you live with walls
long enough, you begin to think
like a room.

The Shallows

Life in the Digital Age
Takes place in the shallows.

No more deep end.
No diving, no jumping.

Life is a wading pool now,
people in up to their knees,
devices in hand.

[Table of Contents](#)

Paul Illidge is the author of *The Bleaks* (ECW Press), a Globe & Mail Best Book of 2014, and *Shakespeare for the E-generation: The Page, the Stage, the Digital Age*. His work appears regularly on Mental Health Talk.info

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