

# 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.

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