

## AS TO THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED

It is evening.  
Say eight twenty three.

An October air stirs the forsythia,  
the flags.

The utilities contrivedly flow

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Consensus sulks in the public library.

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Across town a crowd of citizens  
has gathered for a council hearing,

costumed for a ballpark, a rodeo, church,  
for ego projection,

outpatients, inlaws, comparison shoppers,  
part time father figures,

who are there to take responsibility for potholes,  
tourism, the public good,

to defend themselves against other people's follies,  
officialdom, the times,

against a supposition that silence means consent.

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Consensus prowls the residential zones.

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Where they are absorbed by old movies,  
the promises in the ads,  
by the privacy, the silence, anxieties,  
old instincts,

by words with anger in them, death,  
mistaken ardors, lost convictions,

wastemakers, diarists, litigators,  
prolonged adolescents,

surrounded by conjugal lore,

Time, someone is saying, has no caution.