

It was with a sudden jolt
that light filled the chamber so
instantly. Today,
I consider the speed of light,
but when I try some metaphor
to help me know
the image itself—
the thing itself—
this chamber—what is it
that holds? What, that it
captures? The circumgyration of
a primed pelvis? The chemical
reaction of light on sensitized plate?
And just as quickly as it shuts,
the next opens and a new intimacy
caresses the walls of the chamber.
This camera echoes the
machine gun—impersonal,
killing without aiming, but aiming to
—inflict shots without
vision. The machine gun reaches
across the shift of centuries
to cradle this camera—invested,
as it is, with rapidity, with an
act the human mind, unassisted,
could not achieve.
What did this camera achieve
immediately? It helped Charcot
fragment a dance into the small
parcels to support his points.
We chew and swallow small morsels
this way.
We push aside the shavings from
a pencil this way.

We turn through the pages of a
book exactly in this way.
For this reason—for
these women, for these remnants
of light—this poem stands a one stanza.