I would like to watch a movie tonight
in which a stranger rides into town
or where someone embarks on a long journey,
a movie with the promise of danger,
danger visited upon the citizens of the town
by the stranger who rides in,
or the danger that will befall the person
on his or her long hazardous journey—
it hardly matters to me
so long as I am not in danger,
and not much danger lies in watching
a movie, you might as well agree.

I would prefer to watch this movie at home
than walk out in the cold to a theater
and stand on line for a ticket.

I want to watch it lying down
with the bed hitched up to the television
the way they’d hitch up a stagecoach
to a team of horses
so the movie could pull me along
the crooked, dusty road of its adventures.

I would stay out of harm’s way
by identifying with the characters
like the bartender in the movie about the stranger
who rides into town,
the fellow who knows enough to duck
when a chair shatters the mirror over the bar.

Or the stationmaster
in the movie about the perilous journey,
the fellow who fishes a gold watch from his pocket,
helps a lady onto the train,
and hands up a heavy satchel
to the man with the mustache
and the dangerous eyes,
waving the all-clear to the engineer.
Then the train would pull out of the station
and the movie would continue without me.
And at the end of the day
I would hang up my oval hat on a hook
and take the shortcut home to my two dogs,
my faithful, amorous wife, and my children—
Molly, Lucinda, and Harold, Jr.