

1945

It took me a long time to figure out
what had happened

It was before I was born
but I was alive . . . 74 days waiting to be born

*look at the international dateline
west to east Tuesday becomes Monday*

. . . Syracuse . . . New York
Summer . . . 1945
. . . and a memory that haunted me for years
about a moment in that day or night
and what happened on a carrier out in the Pacific

I didn't understand it . . . *but it happened to me too*

Made up from stories I'd heard
or real

*a flash of experience from him to me
either way*

I remembered

*the instant of the wound
that death that took all night
dragged on then ended
my uncle's life*

. . . my grandmother said she woke up
with a splitting headache that lasted all night
. . . when the headache went away
she knew her son was dead

. . . my father, the older brother,
thought

"It should have been me."

Maybe I absorbed that too.

I was born on a Monday at the end of October

West to East . . . Tuesday becomes Monday

One summer night when I was 19, I woke with a vision
And, after that, I began to believe

"This is my last year."

Odd thoughts for a young man

*"Why am I alive?" "I'm supposed to be dead."
"Why?" . . . "This year, then, will be the year I die."*

Ignored; forgotten . . . felt

Deep inside me . . . year after year

