

By John Ashbery

Alone with our madness and favorite flower

We see that there really is nothing left to write about.
Or rather, it is necessary to write about the same old things
In the same way, repeating the same things over and over
For love to continue and be gradually different.

Beehives and ants have to be re-examined eternally

And the color of the day put in
Hundreds of times and varied from summer to winter
For it to get slowed down to the pace of an authentic
Saraband and huddle there, alive and resting.

Only then can the chronic inattention

Of our lives drape itself around us, conciliatory
And with one eye on those long tan plush shadows
That speak so deeply into our unprepared knowledge
Of ourselves, the talking engines of our day.

John Ashbery, "Late Echo" from *As We Know*. Copyright © 1979 by John Ashbery. Reprinted with the permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc. for the author.

Source: *As We Know* (Viking Press, 1979)