Wenn es nur einmal so ganz stille ware (I,7)*

If only for once it were still.
If the not quite right and the why this
could be muted, and the neighbor's laughter,
and the static my senses make—
if all of it didn't keep me from coming awake—

then in one vast thousandfold thought
I could think you up to where thinking ends.

I could possess you,
even for the brevity of a smile,
to offer you
to all that lives,
in gladness.

* *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, translated by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy, Riverhead Books, New York, 1996

Variation and Reflection on a Theme by Rilke
(the Book of Hours, Book I, Poem 7)*

If just for once the swing of cause and effect,
cause and effect,
would come to rest; if casual events would halt,
and the machine that supplies meaningless laughter
ran down, and my bustling senses, taking a deep breath
fell silent
and left my attention free at last . . .

then my thought, single and multifold,
could think you into itself
until it filled with you to the very brim,
bounding the whole flood of your boundlessness:

and at that timeless moment of possession,
fleeting as a smile, surrender you
and let you flow back into all creation.

*From *Breathing the Water* by Denise Levertov, New Directions, 1984, New York