

Etymology: I

(Bronx Zoo, 03/15/79)

Yes that's me, tapping on the glass of the gator tank. I'm young, hell bent
on making something happen—I mean, god Amy, we've talked about it
at great length: Today, I got off the train & said to them,
You have no idea what you're doing,

do you? I am tired of sleeping in beds with you, tired
of having the same conversation every night
before I go to sleep. Look, so much time
has passed that everything

is proverbial—the peanut gallery, blue
automobiles, army ants, train conductors (you can see
the man's face in the boy but not boy's face
in the man, who grew up, who boiled down to this),

but not just these—look at you, you can't even
say “table” or “floor” without making air quotes
with your fingers & hands, I bet you don't even have a father,
I mean *stet.*, I mean leave me

alone, I mean I am not “hungry” anymore. I am ribs
on dried out plains, I am crying barometer, I
We cannot know how to fear the weather,
since what is the weather if it is not

made wholly of fear? Even my restaurant orders
come from the teleprompter. I am the tree
whose golden leaves will dress you, but I end
like the fossilized stump whose little voice

splintered voice all at once calling *my dear child,*
you do not know, from the inside, you do not
know what it has been like or how lonely I have been!
I am concentric circles. I do not intersect.

I am amber, I covered insect. I yes ossifer/
yes officer, I fine, I castle stairs, I will not
pay you, I did not, I haven't,
I never, I wouldn't, I meant.