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A Sudden Silence – Not Golden

First visit to the USA –
The land of freedom
And: If you can make it there ... etc.
To see a friend who emigrated decades ago
Because he's gay.
Bad times for folks like him
In Germany then.
(You're right: He does live in San Francisco.)

Driving for hours on end
Through countryside - and nothing but.
Understanding
For the first time
Why they feel: We're it!
Landscapes like I've never seen them before:
Endless space.
God's own country – awesome!
(The Black Forest? Just doesn't compare with this!)

At a dinner party this American (senior!) professor
Talks at me:
As close and as big and as loud as can be.
From the back of my mind
Springs the unbidden thought that
What counts as appropriate closeness
Does vary indeed.
(So research on intercultural differences says.)

This time: research confirmed. Absolutely confirmed:
He really does take up quite some space!
More than other folks do.
(Take the British, for example.
Some pretend to not even be there
On occasions like these)
And I am reminded of our 'Quiet American' Peter:
"You hear him before you see him",
So they say.
And when he's there you know he is.
True!
But in his case - delight!

What now?
No longer will the department
Resound to your laughter.

I hate to hear you go!

