

Ned Balbo

Nothing Occurs Here That Is Worthy of Remark

Reader, pay no attention to the goat,
its whiskered muzzle nuzzling the curtain
that protects its hours of contemplation,
as it sniffs the air, green pine-scrub stuck

to bare hills inescapable and pink.

Reader, pay no attention to the goat,
starved dog or stairway leading God knows where—
away from blue huts strung with ratted wire

snarled along tin corrugated roofs—

Don't touch! What do they need such power for,
these denizens of dirt walks that a goat
dare not bestride, however long encamped

in his abode among these human neighbors?

If one old woman, standing at the door
of her own dwelling, draws aside the drape
hiding no horns, no cloven hooves, no goat,

and beckons, eyes locked on you as she mouths,
Come in, gray welcome mat beside her feet
untrod by any guest, acknowledge her;
bow slightly, but don't speak; and as you pass,

stranger, pay no attention to the goat.



NoraSturges

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2004

oil on panel

5 x 5.75 inches