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"An aerosol container in an abandoned peach orchard," a photograph by Adam Ekberg, whose work was on view in February at ClampArt, in New York City.

[Fiction]

LIP SERVICE

By Wolfgang Hilbig, from "I", published in 1993 by S. Fischer Verlag and due out for the first time in English in July from Seagull Books. Hilbig was born in eastern Germany in 1941 and emigrated to West Germany in 1985 because East German authorities would not permit the publication of his books. Before he died, in 2007, he published three novels and three books of poetry and won Germany's Georg Büchner Prize. Translated from the German by Isabel Fargo Cole.

Most of W's perceptions were acquired by looking from outside into the interior of

lighted dwellings; what he saw was filtered through double panes and veiling curtains . . . while he, outside, was in a different atmosphere, the fog-swirled atmosphere of the dark where all movement within the living rooms' inward light seemed unreal to him, shoddy fictions. He didn't understand the words that were spoken in there; when not completely inaudible they assumed an utterly different meaning in the glow of the light-bulbs, the violet phosphorescence of the television screens. . . . No, of these utterances' meanings he knew nothing, he sought their probable sense in the gestures meant to underline the words, he sought to follow the movement of the speakers' lips and to read off syllables, finally he began imitating the interplay of the lips' forms to get at the words, the phrases . . . without knowing, of course, how they were received, these sounds,