

GILLIAN HARDING-RUSSELL

Voice Print 3

Just as the female bat, small brown
undistinguished
flashes into the dark
underside of a bridge, population

of babies barnacled the bridge struts
and supports (she is picking up
radar

from her own young ones,
buried in a forest of sounds, waiting
open-mouthed)

so I, having turned my shoulder, have lost
you among the clothes racks and three fallen-off
shirts left lying between the aisles,
(I can't pick up now!)

frantic—listening
for the thread of your voice
to pull me through a hundred other sounds—

the lady at my elbow asking me
to describe what you are wearing, that other voice
on the intercom, it occurs to me

might scare you away, announcing your name
between asking for price checks and
the *muzak*

and I am calling, calling your name
listening for your small voice

to call me back.