

Every Morning, We Talk about the Fire

Todd Robinson

You are in your clattering life again, taking stock, distant motors sawing
through birdsong, your wife shuffling the floors with a new sore brightening
her neck. Soon she will open your door to talk about the fire, how her ear
seethes with yellow-jackets. She will say in her way that castanets clatter
the boards of her skull. She will say mortality. She will say lonely, say love.
You will say sorry because sorry is a honeyed thing to say, a word
to buy time to figure out what to do, what you might wear, might eat.
You won't say she is a wreck in her dishabille, that you record ruin like

the sage's son who watched
Pompeii burn from a boat
on the wine-dark sea.