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Amos Needs Turning

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You walk across the room, I follow, careful not to step
on the scarf
that grins behind you
through the only nailed window.

AMOS NEEDS TURNING

There's a white in this town that holds
the sun in such a way
it's almost pure.
And ain't it just like God to play
with the small dark look in the face
you've left behind.
Violence is deep with the sleeping.
These sheets have become unbearable.
I kneel to kiss you
the room vanishes and the steps must go in darkness
and I can't help but follow.

Dusk
and his many wounds.
My hand on the holster.
Aren't I the fool?
The proper fool,
the accomplished fool?
And yet I feel what I must call grace.

A tape recorder recites randomly from scripture.
A cup by the door has begun to fall.
A brief thirst still eludes me.

Dawn
and the men walk dogs.
Lillie picks the ticks from strays
and drowns them in a jar
she keeps behind the garage.
With the heel of my boot, I crush

the apples rotting at the curb.
Amos needs turning.

There is beauty in your absence
and defiance in the fields.
The sheep have no integrity
and the shepherds tell lies.

THE CABALIST

The cabalist
takes off his gloves and sits
beside me.

He crosses his legs and rolls a cigarette
his fingers bent
and sonant with the task.
I cross the room to fix us drinks.
Last night I stood here and watched the soldiers
laughing.
I pause at the window.

We almost embrace
on the way up
through fragments of souls we fought for.
He thanks me for the drink.

He stops a young girl in the street and asks her for directions
puts his gloves on
tips his hat at a passing soldier.

There's a ladder for him at the pit.
I watch as he goes down.
Can't see him now
shuffling through the decomposition
trying on coats
slipping rings off fingers.