

Airing Out the Dogs

Jim Daniels

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Dreamy cough of the hungover. Unapologetic
burp of the waylaid and abandoned.

The icy breath of the Reaper's kids
all in your face, demanding to do this, do that.

Cowbell of regret dangling off your neck.
No wolf at the door. Wolf done gone.

No notifications or updates. No juice.
Five dirty toes in the sodden air.

What started with beer and unintended con-
sequences such as etc., etc, ends with blisters

and unpaid bills. By the way, what was that pill
you swallowed? Of all the paths you could have

taken—the ten of them wiggle-wagging
disapproval from all concerned. Early light cuts

between torn blinds. More than your shirt missing.
More than the phone ringing to solicit your version

and your IOUs. Kitchen chair scrapes a wound.
Landlord's thermostat locked up for safe-keeping.

Imaginary dog whining to go out. Go find her.
She who—sigh—who signed the lease with you

in liquid fire and left you with bad checks, sad cheeks,
a handful of expired coupons. She might be asleep.

Right now. With that guy. The same old long story,
tattered pages yellowed by morning sun.

The dream of what was sung out of tune
to begin with, then translated by wolves at the door.

Pain etched with fever of unspecified origin.
Cold feet, literally. Imaginary consolations.

Hypothetical reconciliation. The stink of your feet
after walking all night while she packed.

She left a note that explains everything.