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American Husband

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THE MEAN TIME

After San Francisco, after getting back
from going to San Francisco,
I wash one glass while I unpack
and collect the half-eaten apples
of the afternoon I left
all afternoon. All through each room
of the intolerable tract house of the afternoon:
the interim of the airplane,
the interrogation of the seat strap, then out
into the bright humiliation of high noon.
I'm back to the embarrassment of the bathroom
where the one window watches
while I tweeze tiny feathers
from the breast of the bath mat between
twelve and two. I can feel my feet
because I can feel my feet on fire.
Burnt to the slack asphalt
of the black tarmac
staunching the center of the living room.
I am burning because I've been built to burn
and I have been burning
because I've been left to burn
and I am still burning,
built like a boat tied to a float
and I am forbidden to turn.