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# PROLOGUE

*Meanwhile telephones crouch, getting ready to ring  
In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring  
Intricate rented world begins to rouse.*

—Philip Larkin, “Aubade”

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## AUBADE FOR THE FIRST WEEK

It's all their fault, those naked two,  
blinking into dawn's sadistic glow.

*Let there be light*, God said,  
and there was light. Too much of it.

*Your fig leaf's crooked*, spake Eve.  
Adam fashioned a necktie from a vine.

Biblical trendsetters, they were caught  
pants down before the invention of pants!

Ruined for good, they lugged those dust-  
filled briefcases to work.

Because of them we stumble  
toward the closet, bruising head and heel,

marrying shirt to pants, socks to shoes.  
We busy ourselves with preparation.

For better or worse, we toil over toiletries,  
rake eyes open with the mascara wand.

A crooked seam, button missed, tag  
turned out—so many opportunities

for failure. On the sink's edge  
the blob of toothpaste hardens.

Where are the keys? Where are  
the goddamn keys to the kingdom?

We count the nicks and nylon runs.  
We would give anything to go back

to bed. All day long we await  
the zipper's tiny momentary shush—

all that must be done and  
undone in each other's hands.

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