

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.