

real blood and hurt even  
as the least intelligible murmur  
slips under the skin

with its flicker of inevitability,  
that truth recognized long ago  
beyond any sky unthreading

its constellations, beyond any beauty  
we would prefer to see.

### THE KETTLE HUMS

The kettle hums on its blue ring. Steam  
rubs the windowpanes, and everything

has become small again, even  
the hours, whose creaking as of floorboards

or hidden mice is familiar, really, one of the kinder  
evils, though it can, at three a.m., wake you

into terror—my life, my loved ones—  
but this is what you must not

think of, this is what the friendly kettle  
would protect you from as its vapor

rises so bravely  
from the circle of flame.