

A CERTAIN KIND OF FEAR

Every room is quiet.
The dreams and the emptiness
might be your own. You might be
the arsonist in the rain
and this—the part of the job
you like best.

There is no more sunlight.
The fireman nods at his fireside.

The corridor is narrow. You smell
the anise and ether. You hear
the doctor's whisper.

For his sake
remember the journey,
timetables, salt tablets,
the ticking satchel in the depot.

Remember stories
in the nursery: the baby
wolves, the poisoned mutton,
the bear and the cross
and the young girl's gown.

You will always arrive at this end of the hall

where at night
you press your ear
to the door, see your mother rehearsing
in front of a mirror, again

and again in front of the mirror.