

This Difference Between Novels and Life · *Debora Greger*

Somewhere a novelist described
a character as looking like a piece
of plot, standing in a doorway;
and now I think it's the word "like"

that's important there—this man
at the door with his books and bread
is no invention, not heading next
for some succeeding chapter,

one near the end where he's vehemently
hugged by a woman who's tailed him
for a good hundred pages. No.
He sits on the sagging couch,

eyes closed, and removes his shoes.
Rattling the dark, train whistles
rouse a chorus of neighborhood dogs,
then the house stills around us.

This morning I saw laundry,
left out overnight, swaying, starched
by frost. Raking up a musty blanket
of walnut leaves, I uncovered

a brilliant grass I thought
out of place. But it's not; this
is California, December. What
do I want for you, friend? Me

without history, attachments?
A scene where, when you open the door,
you're greeted by love's racket.
Where is that house, that page?