

Hot Today  
*Kristen Bird-Sheldon*

Last night  
after a drink  
(or was it six?)  
his lips,  
the spoon that  
cook my fix,  
lost the capacity for elocution.  
His voice—  
a heat warped  
eight track  
spewed vitriolic accusation.  
The hitch in his voice—  
once sweetly salacious—  
now a siren's song of coarse revulsion.  
And I said. . .  
"Relax.  
It was just a fling.  
I never even took off my ring.  
It's not like it was love or anything."

Anger heated to a primal froth  
ceramic rained down  
drywall met with force  
as I sat—  
examining my fingernails.

With scientific sympathy  
I looked at him  
—an anode—  
and he at me  
—a cathode—  
and together we are a diode  
and *this*  
this moment illuminates our fundamental function  
of energy  
traveling in only one direction.

This morning  
alone in his bed,  
I am—for a few moments—  
bleary eyed  
hung over  
cotton mouthed.  
Now that the smell of beer and booze  
and the confessions of last night  
are nothing more than stale exhalations—  
Now that it is quiet and I can no longer taste the venom  
on my tongue—  
I wait for clarity to return.

I pretend that I am not one of the flaming lost.  
That my disposition is not so sanguine  
and that my thoughts do not tend to loiter  
in back alleys and unsavory bars.  
I pretend that it is

not so far from pretty  
inside my pretty little head.  
That my life is made of more than  
simple mastication  
verbal defecation  
mental masturbation  
self-flagellation  
that my lot is not a fucking Caligulan affair.

I pretend that my heart is stout  
and my faith does not slump  
against dank and moldy walls.  
That my unions are  
Communions  
and it is not my God that is dead.  
Perhaps I will perform a séance  
to find out how all this ends.

But right now  
all  
that is  
REAL  
all  
that I  
KNOW  
is the bedroom door stands open  
bathed in the light  
of mourning  
and sun

and it looks as though  
it is going to be hot today.