

KIYOKO REIDY

perfect creature

when i wake to find the dog bowl
filled with the last of the hundred
dollar bourbon, i know it is a chance

for me to face how bad it has gotten.
i have had other chances. i am good
at deciding not today. i am good

at staying underwater at holding
my nose and swallowing i am good i am okay
at other things. it is the art of looking

past myself. if i can just keep socks
in pairs, the dishwasher empty and
the liquor shelf stocked what more

could anyone want? there are enough
excuses to pick a different one for each
person that loves me. i'm just making the most

of my last few years of freedom. it is all about
balance. i eat vegetables most days
and run without stopping. i know my limits.

i focus on checking just enough boxes.
when i burn a hole in the table
lighting spilled moonshine

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as a party trick, a table cloth becomes
a permanent fixture. sometimes i misplace
a weekend and while i wait for it to show up

i decide if it is gone for good
i might as well lose the whole week.
recently i got packages i didn't

recall ordering for six days in a row.
it was like i stole my own credit card
and sent myself presents. this way

that i am failing, almost every day now,
this way is not all bad. i still want to make
myself happy. now, make this into a game:

try to remember how the bourbon found
its way into the bowl. i am just keeping
things interesting. i have always

liked puzzles. the bowl is only half full.
i wonder how much the dog drank
where the dog is i wonder if he liked

the good stuff, if i tried to teach him how
to appreciate nice bourbon, how to roll
it around on the tongue like a marble, if

he picked up on the apricot, the oak wood,
molasses. it somehow makes it all
more excusable when you drink good liquor.

this remembering is a tough exercise. i am yelling
the dog's name into the street. i am checking
the closet, the crawlspace. maybe he is better

RED ROCK REVIEW

without me. i see the night like bodies
through a shower curtain. i am jealous
of how the water shines flesh. instead

of playing the game now i am wishing
i was still so glossy. it is hard to stay
interested in things with no shine.