

Political Poem

by Nonnie Augustine

As if to ask if I'm okay,
as if to ask aren't we the same two
on this wet December morning
as ever, as yesterday, a month ago even,
she shoots me a look as I stand by the bed,
then her sane mild brown eyes soften
when I stoop to scratch her belly.

I've just had a few minutes of cable news, sitting with my first cup of coffee out in the Florida room. Earlier (five am, again) my eyes popped open alert to vulgar men in blue suits and red ties trooping through my bedroom, my defiant bedroom— wallpapered with roses spilling from vines strewn about but vaguely climbing (dark red blousy blooms, tender buds, smallish, on an utterly comforting light brown ground, the greens tending olive) hung with photos of family, living and dead; a cloth-covered board crammed with people I need to see and think about often; prints only I need to love; an oil my father painted for me (a realistic image of an imagined river town in old Europe) another oil of a seafront painted for me by a friend in England to remember my time in England; my diploma from Juilliard (fragile with age) shelves for books. The books need more shelves, their own poem, dusting. There's a large window in front of my desk and outside a chaos of palms, ferns, mismatched pavers, pots, the synthetic green of the garden hose looped around a dull metal holder nailed to an enormous old stump and there's a birdbath, empty this morning, but a few mornings ago— a goldfinch! My bedroom holds tight. Resists.

As if the way I keep things is a worthy resistance,

as if digging my heels in like Blossom does when she wants our
walk to go another way will have weight
like she can have weight when she marshals her ten pounds
to be defiant, to object, to refuse, believing in that moment
that she'll get her way, have her say in things, prevail.

