

# Sleep and Poetry

*by* Jeanna Goodrich

It's that dumbass bird  
Singing a confusedly beautiful song  
In the dark of the morning,  
And I know he must be drunk.

It's that nonsensical cadence  
Forming thought after thought  
Because I'm too tired  
To think in anything but unmetered verse.

It's that there's nothing quite like  
Sleep and poetry, which reminds me:  
I still have homework to do  
For that class tomorrow.

It's taken me three days to  
Write this poem, so far. I'm either  
awake too much or asleep too little.

It's that club at the end of the block  
Spilling Spanish speakers onto the streets,  
And I feel like if I wasn't so sleepy,  
I'd be fluent.

It's that incredibly catchy riff  
That plays over and over again  
And begs to be scored,  
The black keys versus the white.

It's that music and madness go  
Hand in hand in times like these,

The earworm threatening to soundtrack  
What little I have left of my dreams.

Seven, now, and  
It's that I still can't tell the difference between  
The noise from the highway  
And the noise from the wind,  
Until one roars louder than the other  
With a sawed-off muffler  
Or a draft through that crack in the door.

It's that time flies when you're having fun:  
Fidgety stillness, three in the  
Morning, mint-scented markers,  
And uninterrupted simplicity.

It's that the whole of my future  
Is no longer tentative,  
And I want to say yes, or no,  
Or apologize.

It's that all of my decisions  
Seem perfectly clear;  
I paint flawless pictures of them with  
Words definitive and pointed.

Ten. Today. A rainy day.  
It's that, because I haven't yet  
Wiped the sleep from my eyes,  
The blur of two windshield wipers  
Going two different ways  
Simultaneously grates my last nerve  
And calms the rest of them.  
I tell myself: only 66 more swipes  
Until my stop; I can feel the welcome of

The cold hardwood floors already.

It's that, suddenly,  
It's no secret why  
The smells of your blanket and of my Bible  
Are the two most comforting to me.

It's that, really, nothing else could be  
Sleep and Poetry, Mr. Keats—  
You were right all along.  
This is the way my words escape me.

It's that ability to write an entire essay  
In fifteen seconds, or to scribble down  
A few lines of prosodic gibberish  
On a scrap of paper on the nightstand.

