

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.

