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ST JOHN’S BURNS DOWN FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME

Let’s say the fix was in. Let’s say history,
Being human and thus short on ideas,
Made change from an old bag of tricks. Say this
Was something reported as news
On a day when your life came to no good.
The new homeless drifting from row houses
Along streets tamped down by the heedless
And paved in afterthought. Out of hollows
In the unkempt, out of Rabbittown and Rawlins Cross,
They weep like mountain runoff in spring
Toward an intermittent stream, in numbers not seen
Since an expiring dominion’s last riot
When the representative nipped out the back and left masses
In siege of their own blank stares to empty their rage
On the architecture. Shop fronts and storm doors
Remade in an image of assymetry we repeatedly
Inhabit. And though there’s nowhere to really go, we have,
At least, been here before. We stop in convenience stores
For pull tabs, hole up in pubs on Water and George
That close their doors in accordance with bylaws
But keep serving to those lucky to be locked in.
We watch our favorite teams on big LCDs
As they succumb in sudden death, where we learn
To lose and be helpless about it. We sit,
Feed the machines, stay one feral glance
From turning on ourselves. The draught taps, the underpasses
Through scaffolding, the acceptance of a certain
Steep downgrade in terrain all lead the way
To a zero hour we never set, but have somehow kept
And from which we’ll start again. A city comes to light,
Will reassemble behind us, finally up to code and arrayed
With hand-painted mailboxes and an impoverished selection
Of heritage colours in hues of a terrifying nostalgia
As we push into the projects of the west end,
The spaces that await us, to speak the words as scripted.
It makes little difference. The television bristles
In its web of static and sunlight warms your unmade bed
As if someone you loved deeply just left it.

The way forward is more solitary but clearly defined,
And our consent in its direction can’t be otherwise.