

The Dark Sabbath

THIS DOG-DEAD day:
Time oozes stubbornly,
Like pus from a wound.
No wind stirs.

Behind our locked door
We, the hungry, cower
And sob in whispers,
Or say nothing at all.

In the street
Dogs with pinned ears
Pad round in circles,
Their tails trailing.

The air is heavy with grief.
I see Gennesaret,
Flat with a dead calm
That is not peace.

The sun sinks at last,
A coin mired in blood.
The women slip out.
No one ate today.
To-morrow we'll need food.

Crying stabs the dark.
In the night, a woman rises:
The reek of juniper and myrrh.
I hear the bolt grate.

Three figures creep past.
I turn back to the wall.
My heart is stone.

This poem is taken from *Thirst*, a newly published collection reviewed on page 35.