

The Characters Speak Up

Adam Day

There are balconies overflowing with red geraniums. Badger sells apricots, asparagus, eggs, acceptance of the end. A kingfisher recites the Nicene Creed and in a pool of broken sunlight, Badger's wife: a piano teacher with knobbly knuckles. One grows dizzy looking down. A prick, she once told Badger, is still a prick though it bends slightly to the left.—*A woman who sings Strauss as marvelously as I do couldn't possibly mean that.—It's only a poem, Dear.—But why us, Badger?—A history—think of it that way if it helps. It may seem personal but it isn't.* Midday is in their apartment, the furnaces roar in the ears, hell revolves, and in poor lighting the elastic eye holds paradise at visible length from blindness—the blackberry knocks.—*I had the distinct feeling someone was about to knock. I suspect there's really nothing to us—he hasn't given us anything resembling a truth against which to measure.* At night.

Badger Speaks to his Love

Adam Day

for

Sleeper, you have wakened from three years
into darkness and distended silence—the broken
lamp and books on the bedroom floor, desk
where the dresser once was, no fireplace but a doorway
and the black cavity beyond. The walls
papered with rungs of light, the floor
moving like brown river water beneath you—
cutting a finger, breaking a tooth, the glottis
freed from a tumor of the tongue—speak
now.