Not Dawn

as all the hideous glory of 5AM

crushed the will to art from the lodgings of my sight

i came across an as-yet untapped kernel —

a question that might never have typed

its manifest primacy, its utter demand

across the grey-white paper of my sleep-shadowed mind

and i went to the physicist

and i asked her

“what is fire? and why is it hot?”

a fine woman, civil and sharp of eye

and she said to me that which i thought an answer

for fire, she said, is the combining of molecules in gaseous form

which release their particles of light

low in the registers of sensation

and each layer of fuel burned is ignited by that above it

its molecules breaking under the tug of oxygen

and with each collision of electron on electron

there is the release of magic, which she called energy

a packet of brief life, soon reflected or absorbed by skin or eye

and there is light, and there is heat, and there is an answer

and i went to the philosopher

and i asked him

“what is fire? and why is it hot?”

a solid man, well-spoken and deep of mind

and he said to me that which i thought an answer

for fire, he said, is a fundamental element

that of the four from which we are composed

which powers our thought and investigation

and which we perceive, through layers of illusion

as the sensation of change, burning and dancing

and which we create, as much as are created by it

for whom is to say from which well the stuff of life is drawn

and there is light, and there is heat, and there is an answer

and i went to the doctor

and i asked her

“what is fire? and why is it hot?”

a true woman, honest faithful to her art

and she said to me that which i thought an answer

for fire, she said, is the destroyer of things

in which are inherent the secrets of life

that which rends cell from cell, and tears the heads from nerves

leaves them gibbering, and us begging for merciful death

and yet, is the giver as well as the taker

for from it comes food, and warmth

and the sustenance of good company

and without these things, we are mere apes, longing for dawn

and there is light, and there is heat, and there is an answer

and i went finally to the poet

and i asked him

“what is fire? and why is it hot?”

a divided man, always of two minds

and he said to myself that which i am:

for fire is the name we give all force

the force that drives the pen across the page

that motivates love, and pulls down the wicked

with the hot breath of hell

and it is hot, because we call it hot, a word

which means *that which will change us forever*:

we are fundamental elements, strange fuckings of molecules

givers and takers of motion and meaning

never-ending collisions of sensation and want

and there is light, and there is heat, and there is, sort of, an answer

and here, now, long past 5AM

the scratching of things left unsaid

burns retinas wounded by excess thought

and i am reminded

of what i knew once

there is no what of fire

there is only the misery of the phoenix

mixed with the odourless, penniless joy of the cremated

and still

it remains,

not dawn.