

A RESPONSE TO THE CRITIQUE OF SUBJECTIVITY

These groceries, for instance.

The mail pursed between
my lips. I'm writing about my life
again. On the radio another
Whitney Houston ballad with love
in the title, voice heavy with generic
longing. I'm on the couch eating
my cereal dry, right out of the box.

I had to drag the clean sheet
flat along the floor to fold it;
I'm crocheting afghans
for men who don't sleep in my bed.

In England a woman played
"I Will Always Love You"
for six consecutive months.
Someone keeps hanging up
on my answering machine,
leaving me with computer advice:

If you'd like to make a call . . .

The cops had to break in
to shut off her stereo, still bleating
its pitiful anthem. I'm sick
of love's constant knocking
and no one there to answer.

The news condenses her to anecdote.

And what else is there
to report? Somewhere
there are fires, a baseball legend
has died, a shoot-out stalls
the 7-Eleven. See their hands
wrapped around billy clubs,
smashing the CD to silver
fragments: a note here, a word
there. I'm imagining her face
on the television, head cocked
to the stereo's green digital,
eyes glazed with repetition,
working the cord with her fingers.