

Tearing Down the Depot

PATRICK CARRINGTON

It's one of those days that's no damn good
from the start. You drop the toast
jelly side down, your shoelace
breaks, every goddamn bone in your body
hurts and nothing can be done about any of it.

And when you push the gear knob of the giant
tracked machine forward, it's not
only to twist steel and bust
concrete but also to shift the dying away
from yourself. Claw meets wall,

you buy in to the argument
that you're only accelerating the natural
effects of weather and gravity.
It's inevitable, it's progress. It's time.
Like God, it knows what's what—

what time really knows is how to extend
our compromises on a plate,
saying, *here, eat, this is your life,*
how to recruit assassins who will sing
its death chant—*Say your prayers, beam.*

Take the orange vest away and you
could be the infantryman
who thinks he has learned how
to stay on the right side of the scope.

Old men gather to watch you. They know
when it's just another condo address
no one will care if it was ever there at all.

A kind of anesthesia settles on them
as they're reminded they too will vanish
with as little fanfare
as a tired railroad station.