

## 780 MONTGOMERY STREET ADDRESSES A FUTURE TENANT

If these walls could talk? Let's be frank—  
you'd tune out, your curiosity hit-and-miss  
as domestic dispute overheard  
through a bedroom wall. You want my  
multilevel back-story 'bout as bad  
as I want to name the owner  
of the blood-stained towel abandoned  
in the second-floor laundry, bad as I want  
to tell whose boxes of empty  
cough-syrup bottles have been choking  
the garbage chute.

I sleep just fine,  
sound as a filing cabinet stuffed  
with security deposits, carefree  
as a notarized lease. The too-much-information  
I expunge from my classifieds listing:  
it's me who discovers the body  
before the super at last lets in the police.  
I who can't turn from the bachelor  
stroking his nightlong loneliness  
in the computer screen's flesh-toned glow.

And in my brick rigidity, grown weepy  
with jealousy at the young mother's  
fertile bump, I who half rot  
with mould in the empty spaces  
between these walls.

None of you  
will stay awake with me,  
but each time you leave, I summon the courage  
for curb appeal, change my locks  
and don my brave face, adding  
another stain-obscuring layer  
to this decades-thick whitewash.