

Catherine Tufariello

The Sill of the World

on first reading Richard Wilbur

She wakes up happy, not remembering why,
A convalescent, light, in cool white sheets.
Sheer curtains fill their bellies with blue sky.
The sun-struck window opens on the street's

Chiaroscuro shimmer, piled meringues
Of clouds, gray squirrels haranguing in the eaves,
The grinding bass and brighter clinks and clangs
Of garbagemen, the shush of linden leaves.

She looks and listens, not remembering why
She'd found the world uninteresting. The men
Remount the truck with cowboy yips, the sigh—
No, gasp—of brakes is—Fumbling for a pen,

She sees face down, spread-winged beside the bed,
The book she'd stayed up reading half the night,
Whose harmonies still floated overhead
After she slept, converging to alight

On boughs turned green again. Wind lifts the latch;
The linden davens, quick with silver flames.
What bird is that one, with a shoulder patch
Of rosy orange? She must learn their names.