

Robin Robertson

Tulips

Holding sand in the Starsign Hotel
on 96th and Madison, trying
not to hear the sirens: the heart's
fist, desire's empty hand.
The room awash with its terrible light;
a sky unable to rain. Cradling a glass
of nothing much at all, it's all
come down to this: the electric fan's
stop-start – the stalled, half-circle twist
of draught over the bed; the sea-spill
of sheets, the head in storm. Look
at what's beached here on the night-stand:
a flipped photograph and a silk scarf, a set
of keys. These tulips, loosening in a vase.