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Remote Voices: Salt Lake City // Litany in April

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Salt Lake City

And I have much to say
here in our small

silent kitchen.
The dry plates on their shelves

the kettle simmers over
low flame. Outside, chickadees

flit between branches
and fences calling

out. Water accepts
heat and boils.

In the bedroom you turn, waking
in soft sheets. Remember the sound

the first warm breeze in March
carrying summer into our nights.

We laid in the grass under the red western sky.
Have we ever been younger?

EVAN GOLDSTEIN

Litany in April

“The prayers of all good people are good.”
-Willa Cather, *My Antonia*

The cold draft from the windowsill dark is good.
The morning is good and the sunlight
is good. You, waking, are good, and the sleep
in your eyes is good. The coffee is hot
and the microwave is loud, and that
is good. The dog, beside you
studying the ground, and you beside it,
studying the grass, are good. The smoke
that vapors from the pipe on your roof
into the gray sky is good. The churches
are empty, the playgrounds bordered
with police tape. Recorded bells chime
the hour, the chalk fades into the sidewalk.

You bury people in good dirt. The price of gold
and houses was good. Your job was good
the shopping cart with the broken wheel
you dragged to the ravine was good, and your clothes
inside it were good. The coffee can that held
the coals was good. The forest was good
and the fire was good, the city burned good.

In the Walmart parking lot you put up good
sturdy tents, and the food you shared

was good. The war was good, and their deaths
were good. The words were good
so the nation was good.

Your kindness was good, your anger
is good. You were singing on the downtown bus
in the clear noon light, and your leg dragged
behind you like a shadow, and you were good.

You are home with the small, golden hours of the day
where the light suspended in the dust shines good.
Out in the street with a million others, working in the dark
you sweat good: You simmer in the dawn.