

MORNINGS IN PARADISE

Each morning I wake up in Paradise,
but still lost in sleep
I think it is Pennsylvania,
so I roll over onto my side
to find some cold sheet, cold comfort,
to ease me into the day.
Stretching my arms and legs,
arching my back, there is a soft jazz
on the radio with horns and piano.
I turn again to face
away from the low sun, hugging
a cool side of the pillow to my head,
neck, and chest. The dog has come in

to listen, and rub his wet nose
along the leg I have broken free
of its covers: this is more of morning
than I had planned on just yet;
his head digging under the blanket
looking for a hand to scratch his ears,
to pet the night's chill from his back.

Water for coffee. Jeans and sweatshirt.
The dog must get outside
before I can wake in peace. The morning

paper is at the step, all the news
that fits, but I turn first
to find out how the Phillies are weathering
September on the west coast. Working in
from the rear of the newspaper.
The front page horrors do not disturb
my empty stomach, since by then
I've had a glass of juice, a half grapefruit,
and am deeply into a second cup of coffee.

Routine, yes. But a fine way to live.
Besides, I understand that any day now
God will be by to steal a rib, paint a finger,
and then there will be someone here
to live happily-ever-after with.