

The Longing for Something to Protect

ties us up with useless sorrow,
winds the intestinal spool
with a painful inept thread
spun of mercenary grief
 (the risk cop in our brain)

something to worry over
under our noses, in the way,
something to keep beside us
which cannot survive without us

something to go home for
and begrudge a little, a gentle
but not binding lease on this
supposedly commodious freedom
 (we check messages like addicts)

something to direct the directionless
heart and spin time's cottony mass
into something other than lists of tasks
 (the work will never be done)

something we cannot pay to insure
but without which we cannot live,
something that will be
 (though we won't see it)
indispensable to love's memory