Good Morning Heartache

That bastard sun rises again, dissolving the only good dream I’ve had all year.

My waking mind feels for hope, blind reach for eyeglasses on the nightstand

or an oxygen regulator fallen from my mouth to the ocean floor.

Across town, my friend can’t lift her head off her pillow, the chemo eating her platelets and maybe the tumor, while in my kitchen, the coffee timer clicks on,

French Roast draining into the carafe. On the news, a Somali mother searches tree bark for emaciated insects: You see, even the bugs are starving. Dear world,

what good can you offer? The finches’ red-breasted tune, these strawberries grown fat around dimpled gold seeds? My son, she brushes dust from his lips, he keeps asking for a donut. Just a nibble of a donut, I don’t know what to say.
Showtime at the Ministry of Lost Causes

On the corner of North Main and Bonanza, Sandy busks for change, her rope-yellow hair gone weeks without water, sun-chapped lips mouthing a rusted harmonica. Give her a cup of coffee, she’ll call you broken blue wing. Ask her where she comes from, she’ll sing, her voice a forest full of birds you can’t name:

You got field mice in your corn palace, ain’t nothin’ you can do.

Field mice in the corn palace, ain’t nothin’ you can do.

Melancholy’s comin’ for you, better put down your broom.

Y’all die a little every day, go ‘head now, put down your broom.
Colossal Failure of Human Design, We Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Your Death

What no god could sink
sunk, and so we trace

our fingers along the filigree
of your demise, imagine

Wallace Hartley’s eight
musicians dragging notes

out of their instruments,
like soldiers begging

their dying comrades
to breathe. *And the band*

*played on*, not because
of some contract loyalty

or ethic of bravery,
but because they knew

the only way to enter
death is as the cello’s

body reverberating
the bow’s final stroke.