

“*But What Are You Celebrating?*”

—DAVID LEHMAN, “APRIL 10”

I’m an unemployed ex-con hiding in a red state,
which sounds like the character sketch

for the protagonist in a disaster novel
in which I’m on the run from someone,

chasing someone else—I don’t know,
haven’t read it. If I’m living out a thriller,

it has a dull middle I can’t get past
like when I first took on *The Divine Comedy* &

gave up halfway through purgatory,
never finding my way to paradise.

If I’m celebrating anything, it’s that my life
has slowed to a point where horrors don’t haunt

or holies entice. Can one go on a quest
without moving? I seek the Grail in stillness.

I savor how I might close my eyes, wake up, &
not see prison bars. What a party:

it’s happening now, again tomorrow.
I look out my window but don’t fear cops

wielding blue flames & billy clubs.
A joyous occasion. You should try it.

I extend an invitation, though you have to
pass through hell on your way here.