

THIS ROOM

Devon Balwit



Image: “Easy Like Sunday Morning” by Shannon Jackson. “This Room” was written by Devon Balwit for *Rattle*’s Ekphrastic Challenge, November 2021, and selected as the Artist’s Choice.

He asks to make love, and because he asks, I do,
though my aging desire has turned instead to

the bedside table, to the *London Review
of Books*, to the now sexier pursuit

of end rhymes and long walks through
leaf-blaze. I’d never thought it true

that the fathomless lust of thirty-two
could silt and still. Now, I must brew

it up if I want it. It’s not you,
I hasten to tell him, unclewing

his anxiety and letting the breeze undo
it. How much earnest whispering this room

has witnessed—plans to make new
life, plans to help failing parents move

to their last dependency, rue
at lost chances, the shy wooing

of new ones—this, too,
what lovers do between the sheets. The view

from the window doesn’t get old, the moon,
and morning peeking in, the bed imbued

with both solemnity and mirth, the glue
that binds us, like two ancient, tangled yews.