

STILL LIFE

A journal is sprawled across the father's lap
the mother bends over a book, the sun
sits above them, a hazy iris in a large blue eye.
The baby coos in the shade, reaches
skyward as if to take hold of a tree, he has
no sense of space or depth –
the whole world seems within his grasp.

MY BODY IS THE SAME HOUSE

But all of the locks have changed.

The mess has been wiped
away, the rugs scrubbed
clean, blemish and blood concealed,
the furniture meticulously rearranged,
staged to mimic a memory.

But I can feel

the shift, how everything has at least
moved by an inch –

now my body is a place

I tiptoe through around every corner,
eyes wide open at all hours,
leaving my bed through the night
to check the doors and windows

THIS IS WHY I CANNOT SLEEP

For three hours I lie awake wrestling
with the night. I rise and draw
a thin blanket across my shoulders and walk
through the house with a book light
like a traveler with a lantern through the darkness.
Everything feels urgent, now.
I must strike before the sun, move
before I am seen; in the night I am greeted
by all the versions of myself
that I could be. I am tormented
by the wasted days
the way a barren woman mourns
the emptiness of her womb –
I am tired of being haunted.
It is my turn to do the haunting

TRAIN STATION

We stand on the terminal, all of us
mothers, spread out in the station like
geese scattered across a field. We look
at each other knowing
we are a part of the same kind.
We know what it is to wait
for someone to come home; we know
the duality of loving and letting go.
Maybe someday when the train screeches
to a halt the doors will open for us instead.
Maybe someday it will be our turn

CRISIS AVERTED

I took the gift of youth in my hands and felt
even then, the value of it, knowing
that it would someday be buried, and I would stand
dressed in black on a cool winter morning, under
the shade of an ageless tree, and ponder at its grave

I do not cry like I used to; my eyes are busy
with visions instead. All my favorite faces play
a part. All the best characters meet
around a table for conversations I've only dreamed of

Sometimes I think it would be enough just to witness
someone else's greatness. Sometimes I walk
in the morning for hours and no longer feel
the weight of time tied around my shoelaces. I only think
of now. I think
I will be happy here