

After Anger

Where are the angels?
In the kitchen's brittle light hard words are fallen
and the angels have retreated,

but not far. We rest our fingers on a tabletop,
touch the knob of a half-closed door;
preoccupied, we fail to feel how each strains
strangely, subtly, like a child rolling in a mother's belly.

The fluorescent lights hover in their electric arcs;
The microwave blinks a thousand inner eyes and hums or sings a hymn.
Beneath the floor, unopinioned wings lift the curled linoleum veil,
flex tessellated feathers, and resettle
to cover bright faces and bright feet.

The kitchen entryway sways imperceptibly
in time to an unheard song in an unknown tongue.
The house fills with an impending holiness,
making the joists and window frames shift and sigh.

All—all—watch, ageless, restless, from their places.

And behind the oven the most patient angels sanctify their spaces—
waiting their dancing hearts and weighing each incensed breath—
steadying an ember taken from the altar of forgiveness and apology,
ready at any moment to offer it to the lips of either one of us—
holding it solemnly in a soup spoon we thought we'd lost.

—Daniel Teichert

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