

Movements Giving Off Light

Dixie Partridge

Drops of water stretch and hold
in the sunlight: the small icicle
sways from the eaves in the thaw.
I see it fall
because I have come to the window
at this moment.

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In my daughter's room: a jagged gash
of lipstick across the mirror.
She is at school—left for her early class
with the usual snatched breakfast,
but always on time.
I placed a clipping from the newspaper
on her desk—her name
highlighted in yellow: straight A's—
and looked up startled into the thick red
across the glass, moved from there
to the day's chores in slowed-motion.

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Dusting, I move aside Rachmaninoff
at the piano where last night
she played again and again
the difficult phrasing.
Next week the recital.

The sound of water
drips a crazy rhythm
from the roof. I read the same page
over and over at my desk, finally
spend the afternoon in the kitchen
kneading dough: molasses and rye
to resilience that will pass
from hand to hand without clinging,
then rise in the slanted sunspot
on the counter.

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She goes straight to the table
and opens her books—trigonometry,
physics. Sunlight ricochets
from the wet patio to the amber hair
at her shoulders where I place my arm.
Startled green eyes take the light.