

How She Comes

MaryJan Munger

Like a storm rowing in. All around tree limbs stagger,
weeds lie flat. Wind and sun like familiars,
canyons nesting in the shadows. Bright feet
never touching down, while the air boils behind her
with unbound veils. It is a new face you too have looked
to see: eyes and jawbone, brazen skin.
A revelation from the bones out.

So often when you get this far, dinner
rings out. At the bang of the screen door
a woman you've always known stands against the wind,
greasy with chicken fat and the afternoon.
She whisks the air through an iron triangle
to fetch you in. You know the shape of those elbows,
the awkward nose, her shoes.
You know all the steps back to the porch
not one of them in mid-air. In the house behind,
the smell of wet rags, ironed shirts,
onions, dish soap, rising bread. These and other
small labors. Regular windows in the walls.
A table with mended chairs. The calendar
of expected holidays. "Wash up," she'll even talk
to you, "the table needs setting. Let's put up
a few more chairs. Why don't you make a salad?"