

Companionship

Derk Koldewyn

We'd had problems, especially lately:
Just last week I snapped at him
and found myself staring into the outraged eyes
of a former national rugby star, his one fist
wrapped around my tie, the other only feet away
shaking with restraint.

He didn't hit me. He did, for half an hour,
sit in the car with the phone. But we reconciled—
fully, tearfully, completely.

But just now, as we finish a dinner appointment
by admiring the family gun collection, George,
a gruff old son of the South, hands him a .22
Like the one Dad's had since he was twelve.
He shoulders it, grins, swivels, and points it at my head—
stopped in mid-turn by Sarah, who'd been out of the room
a moment before. She yanks it away
and jacks six cartridges onto the tan shag carpet.

We watch as they arc, tumbling,
slick steel edges glinting, falling
dull on the floor:

He, sober.
I, amazed.