

# Practicing at Sunrise

*Joy K. Young*

In the morning's glissando,  
Canadian night wrapped tightly  
against opaque windows,  
she rises. The brick in her bed  
long since cold.  
Tugging a starched shift  
over her head while  
a chill trills her spine,  
her teeth clench, knuckles stiff.  
She sucks air; listens.

Her mother is a consonance  
in the yeasty kitchen,  
flames roused, a flat iron  
snug between loaf pans  
on the wide, black stove.

A quick, descending scale  
down the smooth wooden stairs,  
where she pulls on a sweater  
and rubs her small, white wrists  
for a moment  
in the melody  
of the fire.

Mother enters the parlor,  
hot iron in hand,  
drapes a tea towel over the keys  
of the pianoforte,  
and in legato strokes  
warms chilled ivory.