

Necktie

Anita Tanner

Again he stands
at the mirror
and wants to jump
into the waterfall
that hangs from his neck,
widens as it falls,
cascades over
the sternum of his chest.
He wants the invigoration
of that leap—
the exotic darkness
against the ever predictability
of white.

Fidelity to Objects

Anita Tanner

“Love calls us to the things of this world.”—Augustine

The ponderous round oak table
calls our family of ten
to their places,
the crowns of our heads
like small planets
stilled in orbit,
mealtime settings like jewels
in an expansive medallion.

More than five feet in diameter
the table is our desk,
hosting homework at all hours,
filling most of the room
while pieces of coal
seethe in the hearth
making clinkers we will haul out
and dump sizzling in snow.

Mother reads to us
around this table
with a book propped
on what looks like
an ancient dolman.
Blankets tossed over the wood
double as a pirates' cove.
Our hands like lotus blossoms
splay across the surface,
reaching for game pieces strewn there
on this everlasting round,
our bagpipe hearts circumluculent
like suns.
Beneath on the four-legged
heavy pedestal
our twenty feet rest and crisscross.

Round and around
this wheel of life
in the diurnal course of sun,
morning and night we offer
our circle of prayers,
this ecliptic stump
centering us,
its diameter and circumference
forever drawing us in.