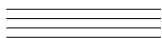


S U N D A Y M I R R O R



S T E P H E N E D G A R

Curbside clean-up week: the suburban streets'
Tree-lined and mown decorum is debased
With heaps of rubbish that each house repeats,
As though the third-world slum,
Perennially stacked with rancid waste,
It hopes not to become.

The sagging cardboard boxes of chipped plates
And pans, old videos, the broken chairs
And bookshelves, limbless dolls and roller skates,
The oddments that one stores
For years and never uses or repairs,
Keyboards and monitors;

And then the molded blocks of styrofoam
And labeled packaging indicative
Of shining new additions to the home:
Surround sound, plasma screen,
All those essential luxuries to live
A life that's never been

So satisfied. And next to one such pile
A dressing table, perfectly intact,
With swivel mirror poised, stands to beguile
Each stray particular
The play of light and shadow may enact,
Turning into an open-air boudoir

The length of Sunday morning. Depending on
The angle, in that stare appear odd scraps
Of passing cars, heads, birds, and then are gone,

Like ramblings of a mind,
Or random proofs of theorems, perhaps,
That reason has declined.

Or in the tilting glass the sky processes –
A window looking on a distant view,
Projected film, or memory that guesses
Beyond its own extent
Somewhere for which, alas, the likes of you
Were clearly never meant.

Or every now and then the plain matte gray
That marks amnesia, or oblivion,
As though there were a blank spot in the day,
A cyclic vacancy,
As though it kept forgetting to go on,
Forgetting how to be.