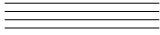


D O M E S T I C S C E N E S



D E V I N J O H N S T O N

A spray of toothbrushes,
stems in a mug:
a family portrait.

*

In dirty light, disordered pairs
of snow boots and galoshes
line the welcome mat:

the stragglers have come home
and passed inward on stocking feet
to the apartment's hidden core.

*

With eyes shut, the child
twirls on the kitchen tile,
a whirling dervish
turning continually
toward herself
like the spindle
on a phonograph
until she wobbles,
drunk with vertigo;
another song
about a baby
and a bottle
ends with a crash.

*

Alone in his room
the youngest one

dreams of whatever
takes place while
he sleeps – the flutter
of a distant storm,
the clink of cups,
a midnight visitor –
and wakes to tell
what we already know.

*

Nothing that we plant thrives here.
Dead wood advances down
our rose stems year by year.
And yet the honeysuckle, a weed,
curls around the base
and climbs with mindless mastery
to reach a waving height
free of thorns and shade.
There, it hangs an anglepod
to feed on the morning light.