

Caroline Kloksiem

Sheeting the house

In this morning every morning
rises and settles reds and yellows
off walls and windows, through children's foreheads

Making do doing our best
down to eight families left, eight
same-thinging mothers and mules
new babies might never hear the bee's bright buzz

But the day-in tit-flap of wet sheets
winged over doors we tack above rooms
this draining awareness: accounting for every fissure

For what's left to do with the little bit of sugar
remember how white over and over, crisp and dry
these sheets' first life remember

How much longer

Psalm

The flat-spoon porch chimes have gotten
wind-bound into one again. Out over the sun-
plain: spoon-curved ribs of working

husbands, a few scattered trees stick-thin
and starving for nests, starving to enfold them
with tools tucked burning in armpits. Collective

wood-plank sweat, their tree-skin bark
curling away from their knuckles
while they work, like wings. Little boys

kick angels in the sand, the land
already erasing itself says *no*. Go on
coughing on cornmeal and wings nightlong.

Posts

We name our boy
birdsong, wheatbloom
corner-of-sky-

ifact, cooling and calm-
light, protective quilt

blankets our half-set breaths
sturdiness: an offering

arrowhead, almost
spearhead, piercing cobalt
authentic air like an art-

ing after fever, faint moon-
white, seven days' stitched grace: time

loosens all territories
name, golden token for a boy

Let me try again

The baby bleats lamblike from the crib, what's baby
for *let me lift my head*. And outside the white sheets *slup slup*
flapping, soft gauze in a gray breeze.

The difference between us: I cried to decide on a plan and then
piled shit-sheets on the lawn. I like the way

my hood shaves the sky. A way to circumcise
that gathering pressure, that tumescence overhead. How basic
clouds like fleas can be—loyal to shadow for a matter

of seconds, then scatter overhead, light as cotton
pills on blankets, the beginnings of prayer, the itch in my stockings. Or light

as why you chose me when another one didn't. Something a child
can't tell: how sharply a drought thins trees, lets in the slicing
light-like fire. The time I began supper blessing
I pledge allegiance— At the time, I didn't

see it: Some things so ripped their split
cannot be darned. Given a do-over,
I'd take forthrightness over joy, what's free: just now, even

the milk tricked out from under me—

Milk, butter

Neck bone gnawed over for marrow:
settling white pool in a cool tin pail.

Its opaque center appears
to look out, watchful with its universal

clouded eye. I cast a folded cloth to
form a barrier, barely full

enough to swish when I carry. Looking
up, I see clouds molding into

shapes of living things, and then something else
entirely. There's the point at which part-

icles get worked into oblivion. A second stage without a name.
What mothers all over share with the the goat... Who knows
how long? Early morning turns, already spitting half-truths.