

Stairway Feng Shui

Ariel Guidry

My mother stalks my bedroom
for layabout clothes; surveys the house
for any dirt, dust, or ruin.
The beds are made,
and the garbage is out on the street.
This is the American Dream:
our two-and-a-half bathrooms
beneath the double-hipped roof.
By happenstance and disaster,
it was ours,
my mother and I. She and her
green paint, hardwood floors, and watermelon
clock, teapot, and salt-and-pepper shakers
in every home
in every place
after every move
watermelons.
Today, she swipes family photos
off walls and tables.
I leave my no-name bedroom,
loiter the hall, descend the stairs,
lock away my Bichon Frisé.
We drive circles around this town.
We drive through and through.
My mother cursing college students
down Main, Lacey her tongue in the sun,
and I, and the students, and the whole town
we are all floating in this Michigan summer,
so above it all.
Until a ring interrupts:
the realtor calls us home.

We open the front door and face the stairs.
The stairs and another lost buyer,
a buried sale.
My father has already gone
and is waiting in Chicago.
It is 2005,
the pin is nearing the bubble
and the Chinese hate this house.