

Eloise Klein Healy

We Are Not Married In A House Together

Here's the clock and here's the table
and here's your daughter with a blond
streak running like a sidewalk
from one ear to the other.

We are not married, we are not in a house together,
she is not my family.

Here's the table you can watch your feet through
and here's the wonderful clock
that has never in my experience worked
and here's the sidewalk through the hanging baskets
where your daughter left her fast tracks
the night she ran away.

We are not married, we are not living
together in a house, she is not my child.

Here is your daughter, little blond
smile that sometimes works and sometimes
just keeps time. She and I sit at the table
and your worry is that she will mock me
and my worry is that we will live
in a house together. I expect to be mocked.
We are not married. I come and go along
the sidewalk. You come and go up and down
my stairs. She can't run away from our home.

She is my family as much as we say she isn't.

The Peahens

River noise replacements have appeared.
Massive rumble of the freeway
in the afternoon. Truck going down
through its gears. Helicopter cutting a circle.
Across the street the black and white dotted
dog some call Daisy or Droopy or Bonnie
looks like a cow grazing on the steep lawn.
That's where the peahens stood so still
the day one of them walked in front
of a car. Her wings hushed in air
and whacked on the pavement
and a thick red river of blood pooled
like red tar on the asphalt.
Her sisters stood like frightened girls
or stone statues. They ignored the wake
of bread bits and bird seed I set out.
They didn't venture onto the street
much after that. Then someone shot one
from its perch. One was stolen. One's left.
I hear her calling over the rush of wind
in the avocado tree.