

Susan Weiner

I Dreamed Mr. Eliot Was A Maid

Here is a mop and pail and a cake of soap,
Clean, clean, the house is unclean,
I will take my sponge and grope
Behind the appliances for dirt;

Here are hands that bleed and are raw,
Clean, clean, the house is unclean.
If you knew what I have seen
You too might throw down other work:

Crumbs and lime, rot, and grime,
Harbor where company never looks,
Quietly breed the brackish slime
And things that scurry in the dark.

I am privy to untold matter
That gathers in the creviced gloom,
I have learned to ignore a tidy room
And check under the bed.

Because these eyes have looked too close,
Clean, clean, this house is unclean,
I struggle with my heart to lose
Knowledge of that darker space;

Hence I sink back in disgust,
Clean, clean, this house is unclean
And grow unquiet when I deem
Even a chair has slipped its place.