

– **there is the home key**

I struck my first note and the room's silence swelled  
from the antiseptic dispenser hazard-red on the wall  
to the reception's almost-spring bouquets – there  
you were cradling your coffee cup with not a word  
to each other or me and I tuned and wondered  
how you knew her and if you awoke together  
and for how long and who you kept vigil for  
and how to spell their name and how you  
spoke the name only you knew them by  
and where sundays mostly found them.

During the chorus I looked up – there  
you were holding your little one up high  
and our eyes drew together and I sparkled  
with mine and I turned the page wondering  
how many nursery rhymes covered the miles  
to here where he sits taller than your sighs  
on your shoulders ever-enchanted by your  
smiling bright and what that smile had  
swallowed from words too wide  
to unknowns that seemed always wider.

I reached the softest section – there  
you were as the double doors gave way  
to the figures who carried you into their  
flashing carriage in the middle of supper  
with your reading specs and today's paper  
and I let the strings ring and wondered  
what the table you just set was like —  
the one they wrested you from tonight  
as you sat in garments you thought  
only your home would keep in sight.

In a music theory class I left long ago  
they called home the key you depart from  
and the one landing your stories safe so  
let me stop my wondering and tell this story  
so this hazard-red room may feel like another  
and if you listen for a second with a stranger  
I may stop your unknowns from growing wider  
and when I strike my last note in the final measure  
to dismiss the wailing carriages that flicker – there  
is the home key and we will come home together.