

– **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.