

DOLLHOUSE

DELANEY KNOTTNERUS

Mommy is propped up in the kitchen cooking dinner
While Daddy is playing catch with Junior outside
On the lawn made of plastic and perfectly round trees
Sissy is patting the cat in the attic while Baby sleeps in the crib,
Shhh... You don't want to wake Baby...
Because if you wake Baby the screams might wake the neighbors
Who will bitch and complain
About a leaky faucet and stained stinky carpet
And how it's never quiet in this building
Because the neighbors above throw parties
With bottles and jarring bass that rattles the walls,
Talking and crashing,
But at night after everyone is asleep in their beds,
Exhausted from living,
Big brass hinges appear on each end of the building with a worn lock
Corresponding key hangs around the neck of Baby
Who now lives there alone.
In a one bedroom apartment away from the perfect plastic pink walls
Of a dollhouse boxed up and forgotten,
Dusty and brittle and ugly,
Because Baby grew up, moved out and works two jobs to pay
For Daddy drinking too much and Mommy never making dinner
Junior won't talk to her anymore and Sissy pregnant at sixteen
The cat ran away and now Baby's laundry is soiled and gray
Boxes of things she can't bear to throw away line walls
And somewhere in there is that dollhouse
Pieces missing and lost, along with the key
Baby yanked off her neck
Ignoring the burn
Running away
To but another
dollhouse.