

Alone for a Week

I've been shuffling
around the house in my thin moccasins
not bothering to turn on lights
or to use dishes, it is quiet
except for the purr of our neighbor's
mowing his homogenous grass in the last
moments of twilight;
the house is dark except for the night-lights
I haven't unplugged in our daughters'
rooms--- those lights
supposed to chase the shadows away,
as though it weren't light that created shadow.

At intervals, I wander into the family room, stare at
the couch, then the blank TV. I am
grabbing at the tail-end of the hour
as it slips around the clock in the corner and my
hands close around still air.

I wonder how long it will take for me
to use up all the air that spent at least some time
in your lungs, moving through your throat and
spilling over your lips?

I know enough to know that I'm not going to get any work
done tonight. I can't let go of the clock
long enough to get lost in some of this stuff you left so I could
complete, undisturbed.

But I don't think I like being undisturbed
or passing by the orange glow from
our daughters' rooms;
and suddenly as my neighbor completes his last lap across
his grass, the evening has gone deaf
and I know fully that silence is a taking away of
something, a loss.

Were I single like one of my friends, perhaps
I would use my dishes and fold the laundry
seeing how these things all have places in the week,
maybe I would throw open the windows to let
today's air in, but in your absence I find that
silence and darkness have new names
and don't whisper, or rise and fall beside me.
The thinness of these moccasins reminds me of the

ground and my weight upon it---
that I'm still here.