

Going Home

by Mari Helen York

Everything is measured out for us, marked, moved in place,
the mirror over the fireplace, the bricks cool to the skin.
Spectators in the house we grew up in, looking with distance.

The lines that predict the house's future in the brick, tell its essence:
beneath the carpet padding, torn up and exposed, are carpet tacks, safety
pins.
Everything is measured out for us, marked, moved in place.

Spectators in the house we grew up in, looking with distance,
the marks in the wallpaper, the picture of Jesus, the chocolate trim,
Remind me of how small we can be in our parent's presence.

The knob on the basement door can still not lock, is still encased,
unable to move so you really must shove it—we squint and notice.
Everything is measured out for us, marked, moved in place.

Spectators in the house we grew up in, looking with distance.
not an easy task when memory molds every cabinet.
The peeling paint on the back door, the leaky faucet so insistent

replacing it would be a betrayal of chicken dinners and chocolate pudding,
the fights over the bathroom at night, the Saturday morning cereal race.
Spectators in the house we grew up in, looking with distance—
everything measured out for us, marked and moved out of place.