

## Hush

All winter in stucco on 65th I learned to love  
what couldn't speak: what began in milk and  
blood. Baby, cat, the man who worked long weeks  
away from home. Forty below. My breath before me,  
snow stiff trees burlapped against processions of  
storms. I shoveled walks, plugged the car into a  
block heater. Nursed the baby, fed the cat. Waited  
for the man I was slow to love. Sometimes I'd ride the  
bus to the bistro, only place in town that served espresso—  
let it flow bitter down my throat—the bistro where Czech  
brothers in white shirts and black trousers knew all about the  
baby, the cat, the man I was slow to love.  
At home, in quiet, I folded laundry, changed the baby's  
diapers, fed the cat, watched backyards fill with snow.  
In spring, green pushing through sidewalk cracks,  
I woke, pressed my mouth to your back—  
you—whom I was slow to love. And bed and house  
smelled forever of me falling suddenly into love, rappelling  
the past in a blaze through decades of renovations, creak  
of floorboards, families coming and going, ledgers of forgotten  
bills, tables laid for supper, someone waving on a front porch,

new brides, the washing of the dead, all the stories

I never wrote about us, your arms around the baby,  
around me, sealed into cracked plaster with a kiss.