

Pirouette

The smell of *AJAX*, orange bits in the sink.
The children playing make-believe,
my hands getting old, my eyes
with that expression of first love
in a photograph taken years ago,
his arms firmly around me, my eyes on fire.
His wife will call now, pregnant
with their second child, she will tell me
of his long working hours, of her loneliness.
The children run breathless. I heat lunch.
My friend Elina's son takes charge, the eldest.
Elina teaches dance all day to pay the rent,
weekly fish soups, socks, tights, then
the dresses that shine expensively
in late bar nights where amateurs envy
her step into that full turn, the pirouette she says
beginners find difficult, grace in the limbs
that would move us into better lives.
Our children run the halls playing
that game the world will always change:
I hear them scream —
I'm the deer, me the rabbit!
Do rabbits live in forests?
I want them to live in forests...

I stir the food, think of how smoothly
the man flirted with me on a plane we took
almost a year ago, his life far away
(2 children, a devoted wife).
Smelling of magazine colognes, he wrote
a number with well-manicured hands,
the number later an ink blur in my washed jeans.
I spread one of Korina's drawings next to him,
he looked carefully at my hands
without creams or rings, the drawn house
exploding with color, windows
in the air, trees, she said it was a forest
with windows, I said a forest didn't have windows,
so she drew a house around it.