

Waking to an Empty House

She has showered and gone and hasn't left a note.
There is only the morning, the apricot sunlight
as hard as fresh-cut boards leaning
yellow and clean against the wall.

You wander the house touching tables.
If your voice would let you, you would say,
"This is me and this is the morning,"
but you're thinking of the Chinese monk who lived
in a belfry for seven years without talking.
Seven years and not a single hello to the bats
that hung in the corners like clenched fists.
Not a mumbled thank you to the girl with yellow hair
who sent his food up on the pulley.

In the garage you find your boots
you've let sit since last winter.
You dust them off, pull the strings tight,
and paint them till they're black and clean as beetles.
In the afternoon, she'll find you in your paisley shorts,
boots laced firm, nuzzling the Siamese.
She'll see your lips moving
but will hear nothing at all.

—Lance E. Larsen