

THE FAMILY WAR

My father made meals underwater
while the war went on. He stirred
enormous pots of s.o.s. in the belly
of a ship, thinking of me held upside
down, he flipped an extra dash of salt
into the stew as the big guns pushed
and recoiled like a woman in labor.

There was a war, the smell of irons
steaming in small apartments and sons
aiming wooden rifles at each other.
There was ma grown big bellied with me
facing the windy sea, that double image
of waiting, dad, a cold shuttling
ocean throwing up stones and salt.

But you came back and blocked up all
the windows in the house until my brother
threw the first punch through the wall.
Then you felt at home, coming at us
in the darkness like a grey slug
from the big guns ready to explode.

THE ANT MAKES PROGRESS TOWARDS HIMSELF

If the page isn't a hole for escape, you learn
to fill the entrance with stones and fear
the thunder that comes rolling to the roots
of your progress. Sometimes, isn't it always
night, you'll carve your rest into the wall
and yell is this enough? The same thin yell
that told you where to dig comes back. Nothing
matters until another tunnel breaks through yours.
Then the shock is seeing someone with your face;
that there's so little left of it, it's grown
so dark, it is the blackness shining at the end.