

## Five Poems · *Nina Bogin*

### IT WAS NOT A STAR

It was not a star loosened from its hold, not  
the night turned inside-out  
by a needle catching up its threads,

it was the hours  
whispering about imperfection, the words  
we simply will not admit,

those graceless truths that prick us  
under the skin—call them  
the smaller cruelties,

so easy, like jewels—  
and we have the gall  
to aspire to purity,

that image of glass  
that sits there  
placidly stitching layettes,

blonde and able to smile  
albeit abstractedly at the children  
pulling at her skirts—

here is a kiss for her lover,  
behind the ear, here is a  
biscuit for the cat—

but the real  
skirt is a lapful  
of pins, that draw

real blood and hurt even  
as the least intelligible murmur  
slips under the skin

with its flicker of inevitability,  
that truth recognized long ago  
beyond any sky unthreading

its constellations, beyond any beauty  
we would prefer to see.

### THE KETTLE HUMS

The kettle hums on its blue ring. Steam  
rubs the windowpanes, and everything

has become small again, even  
the hours, whose creaking as of floorboards

or hidden mice is familiar, really, one of the kinder  
evils, though it can, at three a.m., wake you

into terror—my life, my loved ones—  
but this is what you must not

think of, this is what the friendly kettle  
would protect you from as its vapor

rises so bravely  
from the circle of flame.