

squared-off corners were not so splendid.
Besides, I've seen what's going up
down the block: a village of workers
moving in behind a facade of little doors,
and on the block beyond that, a steel ball
sending the bricks of an old building
everywhere. Besides, I keep asking, *Which
sun do you mean?* She just answers
something about my father. What can he do
that takes all day? His shoulders
go out into light and bring back dusk
as far as the doorstep. I've seen his maps
crumpled on the car seat, his inked lines
wavering across the cornbelt, which he says
strangled the breath last year
out of all of us. Besides, I can't listen
any more to the supper music—violins
skipping their best notes in the scarred
grooves of slow-falling twilight
in the edges of the room I want only
to be out of, out amid the jazz
of crickets, my mouth filled
with the firm gristle of night,
the pop and fizz of traffic,
headlights and dark roads colliding.

HOUSE OF CLUES

After dinner there are board games
on the floor. Our hands push
the tin pipes, the knives
and crowbars, in one room and out
another. Although not a part
of the game, we reward ourselves
with money. How well we know
each other—faces, hands—the lucent

images that fill memory
with what fingertips have felt,
memory that lies like some larger
board between us,

large enough for a thousand rooms.
We roam them easily, though unsure
of a single door. Here
we enter, and here leave,
all of us at once—now in our young
bodies, now in our old. We step
into bedrooms and kitchens and call
each others' names into the dim light.

Finally it is my turn to drag
a heavy thing into the library
where the odor of death is a little nudge
of *déjà vu*. Is it not inevitable
that I must open my heart, that friends
will stumble over one
or another of my many crimes?

I may as well turn up my cards,
those vengeful faces I've held too long.
Let them be taken, shuffled
together with the others', as if truth
puts an end to such play, as if at last
we might walk out of this busy house.