

No One's Mother

I aim my mind toward
Ghostland, Afterlife,
wherever she may be,
Mary, tart Scot trained
to raise other people's kids,
to feed and bathe and discipline.
Get crackin! she'd say,
snapping at our fannies
with a wet dish towel.
Get crackin!
Get off with ye!

I've got a dozen kinds of mint,
fast-spreading neighborhoods
by the shed. Pang of longing.
Where are you,
Mary, fingers loosening
the soil around the runners,
menthol shoots?
She liked her first husband
better than the other one.
She threw my plastic flute
over a cliff because it bugged her.
She was no one's mother.
She stayed with us when
our mother was gone.
When my father brought
his girlfriend to the pool,
she told him to beat it
and he obeyed.