

We meet first over the crib,
fussing in whispers about fans
versus blankets, the chance a cold spell
might wake her if the shouting won't.
Finally we drop our clothes over chairs
and enter our own bed from our own sides.
We each tell one story we'd forgotten until then,
or one dream from morning,
shady without the spell of waking.
As our daughter rustles in her crib behind the wall
I call you "Daddy" or something silly.
You lay a hand between my legs.
Not for the first time I hear you softly swear:
"It seems impossible she could have come from there."

MOTHER'S INCURABLE WISH

Not yet three, you play in the back yard
with an itinerant tribe of neighborhood kids
all four and six years old, wise sisters
you chase madly but can never catch
until they turn sharply and you slam
off-balance into their arms.
Even as they call you "baby," grab
the shovel and pail from your hands,
you beg them to stay in the sandbox with you.

"What did she say?" they yell at me
as I pretend to be busy with my first garden.
But they're too impatient to listen
to my interpretation of baby talk—
there's a wide sidewalk out front
and they've covered barely half the length
of the block—they have roller skates
and bikes and an inspirational need
to move on. Never quiet, they burst shrieking

from our gate, leaving you stricken,
feet shoved through the fence links
unable to follow and doubtful
of your own desire.

“Mommy,” you must finally scream,
“I hurt myself—here—my toe,
my head . . .” You try to keep
from crying as you slam into my arms.
I hold you so tightly the new grass
pulls back around us to look at nature.
We lie on the ground and breathe
together for another minute.
I wish the world would let you love me
always as you do right now.