

Maintenance · *Fleda Brown Jackson*

Last Sunday when we installed the faucet
and cracked the sink, I knew
that nothing, however sound, is fixed.
Then the cat got sick and died,
and now under the bushes
where the white tail used to whip
there are only shadows blowing.

We make long walks in the dark.
Between streetlights, bent down
in our scarves, we take the cold air
against us like medicine, leaving
signs for anyone to follow—
our tissue breaking down, hormones
pulling back. At home,
the pipe under the sink still drips
from three joints where we've wrenched
the threads half bare; the refrigerator
has maybe two years left.
The mortgage is dwindling.
We accumulate frightening sums.