

Mo(u)rning

I rise first, and pad my way through the house,
straighten fringes that last night left a tangle,
empty the dishwasher, put the cat food out,
draw open the blinds to the dim early light.
I search the sky for promises,
then hear your throat-clearing sound.

Your touch on the knob makes a clicking sound;
With my robe for coat, I step out of the house.
The paper cozens me with empty promises.
The cat rubs my legs, her tail a tangle.
Through the windows I see you've turned on the light;
the back door hangs open – you've gone out.

I start the kettle and set my mug out;
the water surges with a throttling sound.
I empty the kettle and snap off the gas light.
The fridge hums the only other voice left in the house.
I smooth the spot where my hair has a tangle
and think of your taking back promises.

Forever and always is not what life promises.
The cat cries to get in, the cat cries to go out.
I tease my robe's cord till its strings are a tangle,
sipping slowly for the sake of the slow sipping sound.
I scrape my steps pacing the length of the house;
I set my empty mug down and turn off the light.

My hand looks translucent, pale and light;
its crossed lines once seemed full of promises.
Letting them spill on the floor of the house,
with my slippered heel I grind them out,
grinding and grinding, not making a sound,
I grind the emptiness to a tangle.

In the bedroom you've left the sheets in a tangle.
I grope my hand for the switch to the light.
Your closet is empty, white, gone without sound,
like our promises,
slowly, inexorably sideslipping out,
escaping through an invisible hole in this house,

this house where once we loved in a tangle.
My back hits the wall, turns out the light;
I keen for promises, listen still for your sound.