

STATISTIC

Half the marriages break up
 before the thirteenth year. Gone:
 the calypso that once played.
 Gone: the grace of the marimbas,
 the steel drums in the straight-away.
 On our honeymoon, what did we know
 of the perpetual trellis that raising
 children is, the consistent drench
 of monthly bills, life
 insurance, memberships, and the requisite
 home repairs, a better screw gun,
 the better tub of gunk
 to strip the buildup in the space
 between oven and vent. It has
 taken me twenty years to discover
 cracks in my apparent happiness,
 my own capacity for cowardice,
 all my petty exits. Still
 I am amazed when she sets the table
 with our wedding silver,
 fills the centerpiece with mangos,
 kumquats, kiwis that open like geodes,
 papayas and Medjool
 dates, lustful and clustered,
 and I am happy again
 just to watch her breathe
 just to watch her
 knit. The clicking needles turn
 some boundless timeline
 into thousands of closures
 and openings, so that marriage may
 put on its sweater,



go out into the world—
 no weeping unwept
 nor any laughter unlaughed,
 though of course there are
 roadblocks and holdbacks,
 so many pitfalls—
 and it will return, for we are
 lock and lock bolt, cup
 and saucer. Everything completed.