

BEHIND THE HOUSE

Jessie Sobey

I grew you behind the house
in quiet rows, your plain seeds
cradled in sinkholes,
thumb-sized, lulled.

When you gasped
out of the warm dirt,

I watered you and watched
your pink-white blades
unfurl — spilling over
the orchard crates.

But your spring hands
now teem in solace,
girdled, black-knotted

in tenuous spindles,
calescent, slighted,
the buds and petals
all husk and sinew.

So I curl up beside
you, behind the house,

a crowded bruise.

WITNESS

Jessie Sobey

Someone among the nether
weeps cilia, has no owning left

has closed sweeping drapes,
has flipped-off switches

has been pacing
where all the wall hooks

are buried — in a drench
of singular's guttering, privacy
is desire misunderstood.

No one over this is ever
unimpaired, better at seeming

seamless — when countertop spots
are spared, because they're proof
someone's living, because

they are there: appearing.

dying kindly, never gouging at the doorknob
or gutting screens of either window, sling the rind-heap
and fennel ribs, contusions of pear —

the pinholed, the starred, the cornices of room barbed
with pelt and sepal, ryegrass sulked in the stairwell.

Here is theater. Here is terrace
and solarium, vodka in the bathwater.

Less is less, but I am clutter and seamstress.
Mirrors despair me, open the room:

a fever of seeds and fig dye, butterweed
flaking over coils of stove and hair,
the clementine's pebbled skin, gluttoned

in lamp dusk. Here in altars of snare, a drip
of cornsilk, a photograph leaching its sheen and husk.

Do not interfere. The shutters
shudder because they must,
and the chorus is a surplus
of sound I will not hear.