

Bernard Bomba

THIS SIDE OF SILENCE

You reach back through your dream
and roll my buttocks under your fingers;
through fissures in sleep light trickles.
Your body shifts, splash of warmth;
featherings from my loins. I gather you
closer. We curl into each other's sleep.
On the other side of your bedroom wall
a snowstorm pummels red brick.

The baby cries and I stagger to her,
thankful really, to be wakened from a dream
of my mother on the night she died:

her head lolling as the first aid men
carry her down the narrow stairs on a chair;
Father trembling in his robe at the door,
going with her for the last time.

I lift our child from the darkness that floods
her crib, and hold her up to the slatted moonlight.
With one hand I pull up the blind;
snowflakes rush at the black window, catch
and splay in our reflection, rain
on the collar of a thief as I turn away
holding her. Margaret clasps my neck,
shimmies, clamps her knees to my ribs.
I wish I could draw her up
over the ledge of her life.

I carry her to our bed. With fluted lips
she forages, revels at your breast.
As we listen to her warbling suckle
our silence blooms between us into smiles
that cover our daughter. In our moment
just before sleep, a tremolo through my spine.
Has a door been opened? Someone must be coming in
from the snow-driven night
to the side of silence that sings.