

Heirloom

Ríonach Reid

There is broken glass on the kitchen floor
Of my family home.
Little tiny fractals sparkling
Casting rays of light
From where they lie scattered

It made such a racket
When it smashed, the glass,
The sound of something delicate
Smooth, nail-thin, shaped like silk drapes, dropped from your
hand,
Breaking apart. Irreparable.

And I felt it then – fury.
Bright as the ruins on the tiles,
In my shoulders, my jaw, in my hands.
Broiling in the back of my throat
Like a mouthful of fresh tea
Too hot to swallow, scalding the tongue.
I wanted to douse you with it –
the hand-me-down wrath of
My God.

And I saw your face,
Reflective, open, round,
like a silver serving tray.

I swallowed the tea,
Horried at the ripple on the surface
Horried it was in me.

And we cleaned up the glass together
And I laughed –
How easy it was to sweep away the mess.
Yet as I brushed I couldn't tell
In the little mirrors made
Did I see myself, or a child, or its mother?

They crunched
When I emptied the dustpan
Into the bin
I whispered back to them
That I was sorry. That it was an accident. That they were loved.

The shards gazed impassive
Remained apart