

## MOVING

*James Papworth—Department of English*

My mother called, crying,  
“We’ve put the house up for sale—  
I can’t climb the stairs anymore.”

Her voice sounds like tin and rain.  
I envision the blue and red sign  
planted like a new tree in their front yard,  
and see strangers looking to begin a new life,  
their own houses too small,  
or divorce or remarriage, transfers maybe;  
how some other would move  
into my childhood room  
and change it forever.

But I’m like this:  
egocentric and a little  
removed from caring.

She would forgive me,  
as mothers forgive their only sons,

as I forgive myself now  
and think of her wanderings  
through the house like a lost child,  
of the packing and throwing out,  
slowly turning some object in her hands  
as its story wanders back to her.

How she must stare at each wall,  
into each empty bedroom,  
her hearing piqued, the voices  
of her grown children made small,  
her gestures open wounds,  
the ignorance of child rearing and letting go.

And now, after we’ve disconnected,  
not knowing how to ease back from sadness,  
how she must be thinking of lunch,  
of the ordinary implements of the house.