

**Families**

A scratching about the eaves  
above the baby's room.  
They are nesting so loud in our heads:  
insulation chewed to swaddling  
through the cold months.

It is a dirt, a life  
grafted onto us.  
They will infest,  
scurry through pipes, timber cracks  
to the secret places.

We breathe, they squeak air.  
We cook, they take spillage.  
Over our loving they fuck and thrive.  
Our words build walls, bridges, they travel the night.  
On my knees I light a fire that warms us all.

We can't wish them away, they will see it through  
until a day the baited grain bites,  
shrivelling the gut in on its silent self.  
I will climb with brush and pan for the stiff, dry corpses.  
Four would be a good number.

—Tony Curtis