

ROBYN JEFFREY

Brick Walk-Up, Brooklyn

A heatwave began the night I arrived
but we ignored our sweat, licked each other dry.
Yet the whole time you kept shushing me
so I didn't disturb your roommate studying.

In the daytime, we worked: each of us writing
in our separate corners. But when I brought you
a glass of water, then kissed the top of your head
you reminded me about the toddler having a nap
downstairs.

My other sounds bothered you too: you winced
over the dropped coffee spoon, and when I sang
you had to run out to the store. But I noticed
you never complained

when the roommate stumbled home at 4:00 a.m.
or when the neighbour blasted her boyfriend;
kids could wail and magpies shriek at dawn
squabbling over day-old bread.

Then one day you said I typed too loud
so I put on my clogs and walked. Clunk
clunk clunk. Down the stairs and out.