

ANGELA REBREC

THERE'S NO HEAD OF A ROUND TABLE

Rain drizzles the street and I can't remember anything
you've ever made. I go about the house, place the children

into their honeycombs, change the wall colour
from amber to vermilion. Our seats at the table surround

the cereal bowls, milk jug, mismatched spoons
like an ambush, a last stand.

Lists that fled in the night arrive refreshed with smooth hands,
they take a chair, join the children's buzzing,

show us how things add up.

The rain taps its rhythm against

the smoke tree out the kitchen window.

They say drones die soon after they mate.

You align calculators in front of your coffee mug:
scientific, mortgage, accounting, graphing.

All the honeycombs I have made by hand,
though only bees know the secret to sweetness.

Droplets cling with their fingertips to the window.
Now someone has left before emptying their bowl.

We pretend at building something: colony, active hive
with its floor joists and trusses,

creaking and bending as voices behind locked doors.

Rain clouds and in-putting numbers,

the rhythm of chewing, hexagons and elbows,
columns that don't line up.

There's a list for everything:
bird feeders filled,

credit card bills paid on-line,
what was said,

what's never been said.

A total of all the sums.

Tomorrow arrives exactly as we remembered—
place the milk jug into the fridge,

the used but unsoiled napkins into the cupboard,
dirty spoons head-down into the cutlery basket.

Love is rationalized, made into algebra;
where something is lost

between the back and forth across the equals.

The rain works its way in a hurry off the house.

Bowls piled, marked with residue beside the sink
and not a chickadee in the smoke tree.

The cat sniffs at three Honey Nut Cheerios
dropped under a chair.

The photo albums in the crawlspace remember
something we've made

like synchronized schedules
or joint chequing accounts.

Water stains the window with its
impenetrable smear.

The furnace runs and I go about the house
giving chase to memory, summon

the children from their honeycombs,
conjure lost cutlery. The walls

murmur with muted tones,
with knowing hues. How we've worked

forever at this business,
counting on our fingers and toes.

Even the rain deserves to fall
on new leaves.