

House of Mothers

by Alexis David

in the dance studio across the street, lanterns of girls step feet foot
ankle, toes of metal,
arch and ache: lamps lamping in a square room that glows on
these november nights

i work in a house of mothers: planes of glass and a door with
the hours posted: 7am–7pm.
mothers tell me of their Julias and Henrys, their a-plus essays,
their college choices.
mothers of childhood friends buy pears, hug me, call me by
a childhood nickname
my mother comes inside to buy a baguette and smiles shyly
mother among mothers
and i am not a mother
and i never walk out the front door that leads to the street where

the children are finished dancing and now whisper yellow to yellow
to yellow.
i restock the eggs tenderly as if they can feel my pulse.

after work i leave through the side door and run in
the dark neighborhood
face bruises pink in the afterlight of day
i run through rooms without doors
rooms of trees and ferns and stars

i eat egg after egg after egg
yellow yolk fat but still i cannot conceive: do you know the song of
a door that won't open?

the little ballet dancers
whisper human follows human follows human
kindness breaks darkness