AT THE PIANO

Wanting to cleave clearly in the mind
the wooden chopping boards of the house
into piano keys,
and the long tables of the dining room
into some imagined concert: Do you hear it?
Yes? Do you not since then not realize
this grand scale?

The poor boy is playing a sonata
in his head, yes? Yes. Now. (Pushed
into agreement as if pushed by birth
into an empty room without choice
and flowers for wallpaper and a mirror
kept blind dark in a drawer)
There was a piano, once, in my head.
And a stage. And the world surprised
by what had been found. Difficult piece:
the left hand flying over the right
and the air-pedal stepped through and clean
to sustain. And all the world standing
behind kitchen counters and the dinner plates
waiting for the imagined overture
to complete its applause:

If only there was no need to explain.
If only the real thing was as clear
and as audible as
once the beautiful music.

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Brown beaver in a stream
and the grass green

Small girl on a swing
and a bird wing

And because he thinks it’s meant to be spring,
he colors the clear edges of all living
things in his piano book—

Where the paw touches sharp the blades
of the green patch and the bare arm
of the blonde girl arcs her slender
reach to the sun. And old Brahms who lifts his hand
in a wave, even if this is meant to be
a slow waltz he’s playing, and a packed
piano concert hall he’s set in where a bright
blue blazer’s not the right suit
for this true master to wear.
This genuine thing:
Every day before the sun rose, I dreamt
the world already in color. Ivy on the old wall
greener by far than any I had seen
the lush trees bending some friends
hiding behind jars, sliding doors
snuck into the empty cabinets of the garage
wanting to be found and:
everyone loved.

Wanting to tell the truth, to play it.
Song remembered from somewhere else
and someone else’s mistake:
the bored boy on the waiting couch
knows the girl now playing the piano
has no applause in sight.
The day could be awash with light!

what colors blind him with the waiting
wrap his hands with a song
fill his eyes while he’s playing
a fast loud trick of a trill in his head
in what was said to be “with feeling”
bird on the wing
small girl’s swing
terrible
terrible thing

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All encompassing terror of the grand design

I wanted the great concertos, the Bach arias.
I wanted: Praise be to God
who fashions with his own hands the universe
and all of creation out of a deep love
for everything without choice.
Without being dramatic.
I wanted the long pause.
I wanted the audience stunned
to tears because: this we have
not heard before in the streets this
song this beautifully done. It moves.
It brings us to the edge of our sight.

*I am not the light*. I was not even part
of its terms of recovery or perfection.
Joy without end without just reward.

Who has not, faced with a sin,
said: I want to be good?
*For he hears even our thoughts.*

I wanted that silence.
I wanted the huge applause after the silence.
PORCH

Because it was what we thought
was meant by family: Laughter.
A new house. A party in the garden
where the tables were filled with young faces.

Who did not want this true
and tender accomplishment? This just
reward handed over to the world’s honest men,
its citizens. Every house

rested on its joys. So when one of the guests
nudged a glass when she was telling a joke
which fell on the floor and broke,

we laughed. We were accountable
merely for our own mistakes and
committed solely. And everything was
part of the good story, really.

How could we not love what it cost?
Crack on the marble floor just set,
dent on a polished
kitchen door. A small window
overlooks the children, one nimble,
one frail, balancing on the far
dge of the porch.