

Stranger House

Maia Parkin

I come home to a robber who replaced me in the night—
who left cabinets and closets and drawers
sprawled open with half projects
abandoned like the half hour
ghost's damp skirt's
rot in the wash

My knees are darker in the afternoon
with the opening and not closing of things
bending and kneeling and picking
out press of footprints in the dust

Alone—with a four serving chicken on the stove—
the smoke alarm is the first sound outside my brain
and I'm whipped into action
flapping a towel and frantically
opening windows and turning fans
practically howling:

Watch me now because I'm out of practice
taking up space