

A Note Left on the Counter

by Danica Colic

I am not a shallow person, I am trying
to explain something—

there is nothing wrong with attending
to the neatness of things, with believing the nights
spent awake and worrying were not wasted, nor
the pains we took, scouring the aisles every weekend
for the things our homes needed and guarding against
what grows in liberal vents and the overlap of shingles.

There is nothing wrong with enacting gratitude;
we were trying to apply life some meaning,
a coat of paint, small loving additions and constant
repairs, the smell of new things, the plastic peeled
from new things was a way of loving life and
prayer for fair judgment, a mark of how much
we valued what was given us—breath, limbs
and shelter that we never took for granted.

And when we hauled our carts to the parking lots
we saw the edges no one had time to care for, the grass
allowed to grow waist-high in red coronas,
and we could love it, also, and know its beauty.

Once my young son went too many days without washing
and the yeasty scent of him stirred in me such a feeling

I could have carried him to bed in my jaws like a cat.
We sent our children to bathe and we cut the grass;
there is order and there is everything else against us
and order to defend; we cared deeply, and more than you.

