

# Braque's Diary of the Atelier Cut-Outs

*by* Tantra Bensko

I straighten sand, filings, coffee  
Grounds into square containers,  
Sponging the sides. The coffee blackens  
The sponge in blotches I will remember  
Tomorrow after I mix the grains and flakes  
With paint; the next painting of my atelier  
Needs a dark corner—a solidity  
Overseeing the cutouts suspended  
From the atelier ceiling.

Yesterday, my war wound answered  
When Pablo, tapping his teeth, said  
I should believe  
More than my studio cutouts like streamers  
For a child's party. My scar  
Reminds me nothing else has meaning.

The flat, aluminum cutouts of bottles, apples,  
Bowls, turn on their quiet wires.  
They move me; I wave breezes to make them  
Live, die, and live  
Into many torn views.

Today, the buxom neighbor carrying blintzes  
Egged me not to care about  
What's not flat. She forgot  
To bend, clanging together  
Some fronts and sides.  
I told her pianos

Sideways in the street were what  
We hid behind. Bullets played  
Clanging tunes like Schoenberg.  
The dead ones grew grayer than  
The piano shadows they lay inside.

Front views cast grey shadows on  
The profile cutouts. The atelier easels  
And chairs dapple their colors  
Onto the slightly warped aluminum.  
The smooth edges glint  
When they take sides  
With the window light.

Cutouts of still things move  
Into all the sides of flatness.

We have to break into enough lies to see.

