



Brown Recluse

Paul Lindholdt

Watching the child nap
she sees a blur
at the crack where wall
and baseboard meet
large as a penny's head
spun widdershins
sidewise across the tile floor.

The nursery, a room
blue with Disney drapes,
no place for a spider
thirsty to sip
from a sleeping toe or ear.
She hears the shallow
breathing cease a moment,
the crib's snowy lamb
decals frisk frozen out of sound
and her cries catch
till the breath
of her sweet only child
takes up its tune once more.

Somewhere cunning
a web already has been spun
on a secret wheel.
Her baby's downy hair

alarms her now, light hatches
shadows and blades of
brown curled legs.

Tonight I will return
from solitary work, papa
and husband. I will
do what I can to hold her,
the child asleep
between us, the baseboards torn
and jagged with nails,
house still heavy
with pesticidal dust and spray.