Halcyon Years
Poetry — Laura Dame

The ants like it there, appearing every summer as a seasonal curse. Little borrowers—different from Mary Norton’s. They listen to the pleas for one more popsicle, one more game, one less storm. They stampede in small fluxes from the cracks in the walls, a quiet bug in a world of whirring cicadas. They are not scared of thunder and lightning. They are not singing and swinging or peaking, never falling.

purple patchwork dress;
cool grass under small tip-toes;
wet laundry, hot breeze.

Moody clouds fill in the gaps of all the newly bare trees. Clouds who look like maybe they might hold snow and that’s good enough, hopeful enough, close enough to a promise. They are the formal invitation to make dust of the dry, brown sculptures that form a leaf museum on the cool stiff ground. They do not smell the bare air so comfy to breath. They do not cry over math at a dining room table that squeaks. They are not trying (so hard) and wondering who to be.

crisp brand-new blue jeans;
arm pumpkin muffins to eat;
flannel sheets on beds.
The frost clings
to the warped window panes like
sea creatures from a frozen world,
peering in at strands of colored lights
and ornaments that dance
on a towering, 6-foot plastic tree.
Little window friends
who tell sugary stories
about forthcoming snow.
They watch the twirls
in a golden crown;
they hear the giggles, the racing heart,
the grinning cheeks.
They are not enchanted
by Rosemary Clooney singing so husky.
They are not hoping
to get snowed in.
They are not the most joyously happy
just because it is freezing.
furred velvet dresses;
cold air smacking barn red walls;
car rides, heat cranked up.

Violets
turn fields into a Monet painting;
blurs of white, purple, blue.
Wildflowers for picking
on new spring days,
offerings of love
from one so small.
They are warm under
the soft yellow sun,
begging to be plucked, caressed,
savored.
They are the harmony to
the buzzing of carpenter bees.
They do not chase
rainbow bubbles through the yard.
They are not squealing
in delight at the feel
of bright warmth on skin.

lime green tee, bare arms;
hot rolls for the Easter feast;
windows open wide.