

*Elizabeth Thomas***Theft**

In the moonlight the irises'  
tongues wag with gossip.  
Somewhere a man has been dreaming  
of the inside of my house.  
In the middle of the night  
I keep the lamp burning  
at my desk. My house unties  
its rooms like lifeboats.  
The bolt unslips the hinge;  
hooks' eyes, zippers slide,  
all undo, all undone.  
His hands are everywhere.  
The electric power company  
switches off. The dam  
clamps down. I hear  
my neighbors turn over  
their stones of sleep.  
Beneath us all, the fault  
shifts like a cold wedge.  
I kick in the heel bone  
of this small despair,  
send love packing back  
to the neighbors.  
My bed escapes downstream  
like a hooded ghost.  
Each foot in a doorway,  
I try straddling the wreckage.  
What love held together  
held outside.  
But who could live  
in a house like this?  
Take it.  
The watch you lifted  
beats in your pocket,  
can tell you what kind  
of time we had.  
I jump out on shore,  
gather fish in the dawn.

My phosphorescent home  
flows by. All I want  
is the morning news.  
I wrap a fish in each page,  
tie them with string.  
I deliver these gifts to my  
neighbors' dewy lawns, where  
their redheaded hedges stood  
guard all night. Every private life  
undone, unloved.