

Robert Farnsworth

Against Snapshots

I suppose it's a bad picture anyway —
 too much contrast and awkward
 composition. But a keepsake of the face
 that fills the corner, whose arm
 along the lower frame bends as if
 in benediction to adjust the glasses
 atop her head. Hired to sit this house
 for a week, I've wakened daily
 to this picture on the wall. Things are
 as I see them at first light:
 a woman kneeling in a white gown
 extends one gracious hand toward something
 in the grass, something unprovided
 by the eye. At the dark lawn's edge
 shines a pond of lilies, polished to abstraction.
 What pleasure day after day
 discovering her again in the clouds and branches
 disclosed by that casual gesture —
 until the actual face must be labored
 into focus, until I don't bother anymore,
 until I'm keeping house for nobody I know.
 Things are as I see them in the undecided
 light. They will not photograph.