

RICK BURSKY

After

After the chairs were standing on tables,
after floors were mopped,
after the faucets stopped dripping,
and the dishwashers finished
smoking cigarettes and throwing dice in the alley,
after the oven cooled and the cockroach
carried the last scrap back to its corner.
Time began to suck at the darkness.
Condensation formed on the window
like fear on a woman's upper lip.
After all that, morning in its coalminer helmet,
lunch pail in hand, boarded a train and began
its commute through the world's cave.
The sun leaned a ladder against the cemetery gate
and climbed from its nocturnal grave.
A little boy walked to school on the empty street.
The weight of a book turned his arm into a pendulum
swaying from where he had been to where he was going,
the needle on a compass looking for a place to sleep.