
SHARON DOLIN

Gnats

have infested the air the kitchen the living room even the bedroom alighting
on my computer screen as I work or watch my arm little killings I
perform against window daily smashing sink waiting food page Where
have they come from: the ficus plant—once a flood of golden blooms it should
have been a painting dried and died and I clipped their umber heads off
watered the stems until I couldn't stand it—stunted green things breeding them
or was it the soil? Fetid. Something is rotten in the state of my life. Some discord.
Decay. Disused half of the bed. Invisible wound drawing out flies from the aether
feeding off something—what?—my shrapneled heart? my slain life as wife?—
that has festered.

I keep killing them mid-flight with a clap as they
slow—drunk

—some of them quite large with red eyes resting on walls just out of reach teeming
at split tips of bruised bananas I hate the way they're drawn to the sink to drink—
drown in my fear before I've drunk my tea—float in my son's soup so nothing can be
free of them. Flying at my face. Making me face it. And face it. Left to rankle
at having been defaced. Replaced. Erased.