Unseen

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"Nothing the hand does can stitch time back to that place where mind and eye might mend the world to wholeness. Always two worlds."—from the poem "Stitches" by Debra Kang Dean

Silence kept me trapped in this place
Once a home, now barely a place to live . . .

My secret life unseen by the parents,
who picked me up for Girl Scouts
Who didn’t see me
Carefully peering out the kitchen window,
Who didn’t know
That I was anxiously waiting their arrival
so I could jump up and go . . .

Leave my secret life,
Unseen by the friends who never came over
for the birthday parties that never happened
or the sleepovers I never had . . .

Going to the babysitters
was an escape from the secret life
I purposefully kept unseen,
Waffles instead of hash browns
Fresh sandwiches on wheat bread
Instead of the Happy Meals
that I was usually fed . . .

Years passed before my family knew
Years passed before they found out
Years before they saw . . .
All the empty cupboards
and the dirty dishes left unclean.
Junk mail from 1988 up to 1998 back down to 1992
Strung across the floor of every room . . .

Years before they saw . . , the gaping hole
in the wall by the front door.
The fiberglass ventilation
that wanted to escape too,
Falling into little pink piles
behind Daddy’s recliner chair . . .

Years before they saw . . . the hole
that used to be the floor,
next to the bathroom
covered by the flimsy plywood
that Dad had placed sloppily upon it
When I was afraid I might fall through.

Years before they saw . . .
Everything