

About *Crawl Space*

The poems in *Crawl Space* were composed using a typewriter, working on commercial paint sample cards; each card is an example of a different shade of white interior house paint. The tools of composition provided useful constraints and suggestions, which are evident in both the form and content of the poems—a meditation on walls, both real and metaphorical, in marriage and the trappings of domesticity. I drafted versions of each of the poems (necessitating frequent trips to Home Depot to replenish paint card supplies) and eventually made a few complete sets, one of which is housed in the Yale Collection of American Literature at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

The following is a sample of the 24 poems in the series.

—Suzanne Heyd

F19

F19

The air swallowing  
us is preservative.  
At once rafter &  
beam invert to ship-  
wreck: the house  
kept secrets up-  
ended, walls blanch  
a doorway question,  
divers' bait. Oxygen  
tabloids among the  
rusted nails & sunken  
nuptial bands. Tides,  
mind you, change  
the angle of descent.

OW-6-2  
Parrafin

OW-6-2  
Parrafin

D20

D20

they lid-lock, they lip.

Elms white noise & we  
are all about it, we &  
our lost shoes, bedrag-  
gled suits. Expect a  
birthday & guests per-  
petual arrive. If I plait  
my hair & stop trying  
so hard. Haul tarnish  
to doorjambs, if I  
pocket loose change.  
Curtains disclose leafy  
ears, vine the eyes &  
cushions give, betray  
no evidence of wear.  
The guests they extemp-  
orize, they umbrella  
spine with perfume jars,

OW-4-3  
Warm Welcome

OW-4-3  
Warm Welcome

A18

A18

I lettered you long-  
hand, used words  
lifted piecemeal  
from every book  
in the house. I  
watched oceans  
churn all night,  
rock once volcanic.  
Our steps swept  
off in weather's  
impenitent tides.  
What's shelved  
remains simply  
breath. I exploded  
my given heart.  
I tried to love  
you & printed it.

OW-1-1  
Whispering Wind

OW-1-1  
Whispering Wind

A21

A21

This is the past.  
The cars go by, behind  
our backs, everyone is  
leaving for somewhere  
else. Nails snag on any  
imperfection & there  
are three more foods  
she learns to deny  
herself. Yellow lumps  
in the stomach. Station  
it. Ant on the sill, in  
the cup, treading water.  
Dear starveling, if  
you subdue submerge,  
if you never open  
your mouth.

OW-1-4  
Ballet Slipper

OW-1-4  
Ballet Slipper

C21

C21

Sleep takes place  
in the skull, words  
web away the dark  
cupboards & the day  
can't move into its  
weather. Tomorrow  
a stutter corrodes  
the tongue's production  
of wonder, a dated  
letter arrests the flow  
of a day. Are you  
hungry, yet, again?  
What will become of  
your basket of eggs.  
Your buried lover  
seeding spring from  
her soiled throat.

OW-3-4  
Bell Song

OW-3-4  
Bell Song