

## Welcome

It reminded me a lot  
like an indoor yard sale,  
the January night  
our lease finally ended,

as my wrist turned the brass knob  
of our apartment's front door  
to the sights and scents  
of piled cardboard nostalgia

that was labeled with black marker  
and scratched out words,  
cluttered open in the center  
of our bare living room.

With the tongues of box panels  
sticking out at me  
like children seeking attention,  
I decided it was best to reminisce awhile.

So I dug with curiosity  
discovering the tawny floral dress  
you wore during the summer  
we made love in the Poconos,

and the poem I wrote for you  
scrawled on the inside panel  
of a good humor  
"Happy Birthday!" card,

or even broken picture frames  
and the collection  
of Kerouac books—  
the writer whose grave

I wanted to propose  
to you on one day  
when we had enough credits  
to finish school.

But then my attention  
shattered when I noticed you  
along the kitchen wall  
like a little girl

at a lemonade stand, unnoticed,  
who decided to pack up for the day.  
With rain in your eyes  
and thunder in your voice,

all that you left for me  
by the end of the night  
was just the outside doormat  
with the seven letters  
torn off.