

A Poem Buried Beneath the Floorboards

Amanda Roth

Do you remember this spring when that house on the Atlantic crumpled
into the sea? It happened just as I stopped sleeping again, just as the
distance between my life and my body lengthened. How do you sleep
when you never fully wake up? The first things I see in the morning are
the pictures from Before, when my eyes were still alive. I avoid the
mirror. It tells the story I do not want to hear. I gathered your
words to make a rope — anything to keep me from drifting off to sea. In
trying to become water, I have become undone. The shadows
under my eyes are named Tremor and Obliterate. In a cold room, I am
sweating. In a bed, I am wide awake. The birds wheel overhead.
There was Before there was After but where am I now?
There is a wreckage of birds in my chest; a bell breaking behind
my eyes. Why are the windows always the first to shatter? There are
rooms I still want to inhabit that are sliding into the sea. What
comes after an After? How do you recognize an end? All of this
is true if my body were a house.