

Old Habits—A Semester at Home in 2020

A pencil-drawn schedule taped to the door:
weekdays given twelve hour slots
with red scribbles marking filled time.

“Live conferencing,”
they whisper,
“please don’t knock.”

The room is dim
with two side-table
lamps and
a window the sun only enters
from eleven to four each day.

What does come through the window
at any time they please,
are dog barks,
honking car horns,
the drone of neighboring lawn mowers,
and the thrum of distant music.

My head hurts.

The girl who lives here
did not talk to friends
outside of school hours—
sixteen-year-old Saturdays spent
largely in shut-door quiet.

That girl makes
my stomach twist and
my throat tighten;
 this is the room she lives in.

When I lie down
on those blue and white sheets
under that blue and white quilt
she crawls into my body.
This room doesn’t know me now
unless I look like her.

A pencil-drawn schedule
teaches me to leave her here,
quiet as a memory,
behind the door with
red scribbles spread across each day