

## **In the tower**

Allie Gips

Hours before the vernal equinox and  
Fat wet flakes confetti our patio furniture,  
Still free to wander where they want,  
When they want. To their dampening quiet,  
I wash dishes, fold laundry, practice yoga.

I try to forget that I cannot leave but  
Each minute falls just as heavy as the  
Mounting drifts outside.  
Miles away, my lover is wrapped in  
Dwindling paper and plastic, doing

A job that just days ago didn't feel  
So dangerous. That was the old world.  
In the new world, each speck he carries  
Home is an assault on our imagined  
Future. I discard everything but this moment

And set up a decontamination zone in  
The garage. Through the television screen,  
The slow-breathing yoga instructor says  
To take this calm and carry it forward, let it  
Permeate whatever real-world tasks remain.

But what if the only task left is to worry?  
I worry about the slick snowy roads  
I worry about the open-armed hospitals  
I worry about the man I love, the man  
I plan to marry, the man whose children

I ache to raise. I worry he will leave me  
Without wanting to. I breathe through my nose  
But it does not make a difference. I wait  
Like Rapunzel for his arrival. Once, I, too,  
Carried the sword, but now I find myself

Stripped and naked, unable to help him  
Defend the kingdom. Tomorrow, the snow  
Will rest still and clean; no one to dirty it,  
No one to scold it for arriving on the first day  
Of spring. Tomorrow, maybe, I will find tasks

Beyond worry. But not today.  
Today, I braid my hair into a long rope.  
Strand by strand, I try to pull him home.