

ADELE GRAF

## THERE

In the front room that I seldom use  
I climbed a low ladder to reach  
my white teapot

and there was my sister, her head wedged  
between the bookcase and the ceiling.  
Waiting, she breathed with no sound.

Months ago I'd been told she had died:  
ashes spread on the ocean  
before I could see her.

Yet in my dream her hair was as dark  
as she'd always kept it. She said nothing, though I listened  
for her exclamation marks.

How had I overlooked her? Head hidden  
but her body in view down tiers of shelves. She rested  
both feet on a shelf halfway down.

After I found her  
we stepped from ladder rungs in tandem  
onto the hardwood floor. We stood

and beheld  
each other, tasted the air in my room. My sister's  
lips didn't move. My own mouth opened

then closed without speech. *Happiness* too narrow  
a word for me to pronounce, bounded  
by too many letters. *Joy* too short, with too few.