

Naomi Guttman

AFTER HOURS

It's the time when mothers—hands in dishwater
scrubbing last night's crusted roaster—notice blue icicles
pending from the neighbors' eaves and recall
vapors crowded with deep-winged angels.

The time between homework and supper
when girls lie on sofas, straining
for that soft annunciation of future sorrows and joys
spinning like twisters on a green horizon.

In evenings before summer begins, when children shout
and hide between hedges and garages, it happens too—
after mothers have called them back into humid houses
where they are bathed and brushed and left in darkening rooms.

And later, when fathers have removed their ties,
switched off the voices of famine and war, when there is nothing
left to answer a child with, here it is also—
the weight of a sigh before it lets go.