

“Love Is An Airborne Thing”

—Gerald Stern

All I want is to sit cross-legged once more under our square grand piano and hear the felted hammers rain music over my head as my mother’s bare foot—her toes with a pink shimmer of polish—pumps the pedals. *House of the Rising Sun* is her favorite and though I don’t know what that means, I think a house named after dawn is beautiful, just like her knees that bump the piano’s edge every time she presses down and has to lean forward on the broken stool, the heel of her left foot raised for balance. Her nails never stop clicking the keys. During the loud parts I press my palms up to the instrument’s belly and feel the wings of birds lift in one chord, and I no longer have hands but feathers. Everything—piano, mother, me—is risen.

* The Weber square grand piano was manufactured in New York in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It’s known for its Rosewood body, which was carved in the Victorian Rococo style.

Published in *Gargoyle*