

Winter Précis

I was a tourist for a night, in a high-rise
by the water, tampons stuffed in my coat pockets,

toothbrush mildewing inside a reused Ziploc.
Early March but warm enough to walk along

the pier, to walk forward and then backward,
brushing my hand against the sagging flagstone

and peering into other people's apartments.
Each window was a square of light, a diorama

of a life. An unmade bed. Tulips dying
in a vase. A black thong flung atop an ottoman.

It seemed the walls were ad hoc, temporary,
flimsy frames the actors paced, confined

within their chosen scenes. Strange
to choose to be a silhouette—

to jostle like a puppet on a stage, on a page
ripped from a book of children's games.

Marbles was a game I played, crouched
on the blacktop, dirtying my skirt,

my shooter a cat's eye shot with shards
of icy blue. The perfect circle

drawn in chalk, could it circumscribe
them now? Dear agitated creatures.