

## Memories

it came into our lives unexpectedly  
like an unwanted child  
rudely shoved into the living room  
through the narrow doors  
by two white-shirted beer-bellied  
brutes heaving and grunting like  
pigs in heat

i remember it arriving  
on a hot summer afternoon  
charged on dad's meager pay

once in the house  
our lives would never  
be the same

many a night  
i would sneak from bed  
down the hallway  
to peek through the door  
where mother and the beast  
engaged in battle  
like knights of old  
jousting for honor

mother slouched over the stool  
her eyes dreamlike  
half-shut  
hair disheveled  
each magical musical note  
bringing her back to kinder times  
before the weight of marriage  
crushed her like a bulldozer

her fingers tickling those  
ivory keys with tender notes of love  
looking like a chinese sewing lady  
in a garment shop

as if each note were  
a perfect stitch binding  
her life to a new scrap  
of cloth

-- A.D. Winans in *The Next Parish Over: a Collection of Irish-American Writing*, ed. Patricia Monaghan