

## Still life with Writing Desk

Emily Barker

She looks up from words and sees a river.  
A postcard mirror. Eye level. Misted.  
*Autumn* she thinks. Wipes her hand  
across the cold surface, sees herself still there.

Beneath the postcard, petals fall.  
Ascension into memory  
through dried roses crushed  
like lovers under the soft light  
of an aureate lamp. A desktop garden

where flood themes flood themselves  
(her river, the endless question of home)  
in black rivulets across the sodden page.  
She sits, cornered by Cotswold stone  
old as white ghosts at Botany Bay.

Outside it's dark already. The new winter  
scrapes fingernail branches down the glass.  
She writes reasons why she stays away.  
With the missing comes a constant source of rain.