

optical illusion

Kendra came home from the hospital today, tender and glacial. It took her so long to climb the front steps, each one impossible, eternal. Ours are larger than normal, of course I'd never noticed. Same things seen differently. For the tallest ones she sat on a chair positioned at the edge, turning her knees while sitting to then ascend. Her face was worn, wincing. A place we could not access. Silky shirt with green and white stripes that her mom got from Victoria's Secret, the nearest store to the hospital, colorful beaded necklaces from Chin, something cheerful. You look like mardi gras, I said, I felt foolish. We must have seemed so far away. I kept thinking of the moment of impact. How scary it must have been, and then to have to wait, how endless. At the door at last she turned around and said *goodbye outside world, I'll miss you* (damn). She was on the porch again in just a week, but already the season had changed. Sitting in a rocking chair, blankets on her lap, scarf, hat. I thought of the drawing that's both an old and young woman depending on how you look at it. She was writing in a journal, the words looked very small. Were they smaller than before? She said that she felt like a child, the connotation negative. The connotation how our wretched culture teaches us that we must rely on ourselves. To be ashamed to ask for help, to need it. To hide away when we get old so no one has to see, no one has to think about infirmity. And we forget how anything can happen, at any time, to anyone. Especially driving, out there in our death machines.

