

Grandma Dottie's Piano

Hannah Sporleder

Scampering down the steps, quickly, (but not too quickly.)
Kneecaps, elbows, and vertebrae
tingle with memories of bumps and bruises from tumbles before.
Cement steps slap soles
Passing peeling paint, old orange stone wall.

Sitting in the corner, quiet and composed,
like a grandfather
snoozing in his easy chair, awaiting the wake-up call
of a child bearing a storybook.
Here it's been residing, perhaps since the dawn of time.
(Probably longer.)
Peaceful and patient, awaiting my small fingers.

Creaky wooden frame, old as the Earth (at least to me),
dark as the dirt on the bottoms of my feet.
I take my place upon the slanted stool, my majestic throne
and prepare my masterpiece.
(Not that it ever really took that long to prepare.)

Old inner workings creak, chain reactions set into motion.
Long, wavering notes float
beneath the heavy lid like the curling smoke of incense,
Twisting up, higher and higher
disappearing into the murky darkness of the high ceiling, lounging there,
echoing in the dank basement.
(I wonder if anyone upstairs can hear me playing.)

Some keys ring true, others quiver on sour notes,
reaching for their rightful timbre,
a gently jarring request to be tuned.
(Middle C doesn't work at all.)
There is no melody, no harmony, no bridge, chorus, or coda.

(But I still think it's beautiful.)