

The Same

by Philip F. Clark

The homes lie all in a row, the same windows
and doors; fresh paint every year.
The papers thrown just right, to the curbs,
all the same. The news is read.
Children get on the bus every day,
the same one. The sun is the same;
the night comes up, the stars do too.
Shirts are put on, and ties; dresses
are pressed, gold bracelets passed
through the same hands.
Nods yes, and no, the same.
The trees never lose their leaves.

The arguments are the same; someone
was right, or wrong; tables are set with silver,
the plates are set and gleaming. Lipstick
rubbed on; pants and belts take their place
and wait for walking. Perfume is tipped
onto necks, in the same place. The air
is the same; rain or shine. Smiles go on.
Hands reach for books, and pens for ink
and paper. The paper is the same.
Lamps are lit and curtains closed.
Conversation falters, or begins its
gambits. All the same.

The sea is the same, and far away;
a place to visit on the same day. Someone
answers a question, fills a need. The clock
asks nothing of time. The breath is the same
in all the same rooms. Something quickens.
The bus is late; the papers disappear.

The china breaks, and the suit does not fit.
The dress is torn; voices are raised.
The trees have gone to bark and bone.

