

THE WRITER

*In her room at the top of the house,
Where light breaks, and the windows are tossed with linden,
My daughter is writing a story.*

*I pause in the stairwell, hearing
From her shut door a commotion of typewriter-keys
Like a chain hauled over a gunwale.*

*Young as she is, the stuff
Of her life is a great cargo, and some of it heavy:
I wish her a lucky passage.*

*But now it is she who pauses,
As if to reject my thought and its easy figure.
A stillness greatens, in which*

*The whole house seems to be thinking,
And then she is at it again with a bunched clamor
Of strokes, and again is silent.*

*I remember the dazed starling
Which was trapped in that very room, two years ago;
How we stole in, lifted a sash*

*And retreated, not to affright it;
And how for a helpless hour, through the crack of the door,
We watched the sleek, wild, dark*

*And iridescent creature
Batter against the brilliance, drop like a glove
To the hard floor, or the desk-top,*

*And wait then, humped and bloody,
For the wits to try it again; and how our spirits
Rose when, suddenly sure,*

*It lifted off from a chair-back,
Beating a smooth course for the right window
And clearing the sill of the world.*

*It is always a matter, my darling,
Of life or death, as I had forgotten. I wish
What I wished you before, but harder.*

Richard Wilbur

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