

1974

## The Barn

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We have a hinting household here.  
Hideous flies buzz between  
winter windows  
and inner windows.  
They buzz insomnia at night.  
And in the day they --  
fat and black --  
will lick their sneers  
and rub their spindled appendages.

We open screens to shoo them  
when the sun is screaming summer.  
But neighbors send us hurtling messages  
drenched in martinis  
and 'going-homes to mother.'  
So we decently slam our windows shut.

And we indigest in uncomfortable  
silence at dinners. Crunching  
and squashing and slopping  
and smacking.  
Glances of suspicion pour around  
like spilling milk.  
And we lower our eyes  
to avoid the invisible mirrored-maze  
of insistent monotone humming on windows.

### Dawn Patnode

#### The Barn

Cobwebs laced on bulging beams  
grasp bits of straw and dust.  
Heavy, hot smells of animal breath  
and the cool musty hay.  
Horses' hoofs shuffle soundlessly under dirt floors.  
We look long, very long at the birth of a calf-  
the silence of life's emergence lays softly in the stall.  
Her wet wisps of hair warm with the mother's blood.  
Slowly in the night the crystal casing is gone  
and the cow nudges to stand the delicate bones  
of her new companion.

Mary Schloss