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Winter Laundry

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O'Hara: Winter Laundry

WINTER LAUNDRY

Patricia O'Hara

Perched in her second-floor kitchen window,
Nana shakes, then pins, each piece on the taut,
white line. Pin. Push. Pin. Push. The cold, wet weight
first do the sheets then towels and last the clothes
bowed the line (dip, swoon) toward the yard below.
Inside the steam pipes mutter noisy heat,
never enough to erase the thick, white
ice that furred the windows. Mundane tableau:
legs of trousers, upside-down shirts, half slippers
wave, fanned by snow-cold air, and grow stiff.
In the still, late afternoon she pulls, piece
by piece, the laundry in. The iron's hiss
on the pillowcase I press whispers *light*
and puffs midday wind through the kitchen night.