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# Song of the Secretary, Hot Lab

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*Song of the Secretary, Hot Lab*

All day in a concrete brick building without  
even one shaft of natural light, I learned  
to stare windows into my typing as my Selectric  
raced along at 74 words per minute.

Atomic symbols—Sr-90, Cs-137, I-131,  
U-238, Pu-239—darkened my work  
like birds tangled in the sky. But I fixed on  
clouds of my own bored making,

the small droplets of my idle thoughts,  
and I floated among them, oblivious to birds . . .  
while on the other side of the wall—  
beyond the photo of my kids and dog

lined up in birthday hats—I don't know why  
or when, a lab technician innocently moved  
a very important brick,  
and so a window opened over my desk,

though I never saw its light. All the same,  
rays flooded in, and the shadow  
of those birds darkened my dosimeter,  
and later the mammogram of my right breast.