

Faces of Posterity

- Darrell Petska

Kith and kin. Hearth and home.
On such sweet milk we are reared,

then we leave, confident of the world,
forswearing old ways and plain spaces,
heaping miles on the past's fresh grave.

Yet memory stands against the wind,
storied names still knee-deep with intention,
occupied endlessly by yesterday,
forever calling you to dinner,
dishes steaming on the sideboard—

loved faces chiseled by acceptance
smiling from your mantel, your eyes tearing
at hindsight's forays into lives nudged
kicking and screaming toward light.

Soon your children will have borne their own.
Ought you air their rooms? Dust the dishes?
Locate the boxes of baby clothes?

Each has a key, a place reserved at table.
You remind yourself to accept, wait, smile —
growing all the while into your larger life

as do infants into the next size up,
as will your children, slowly but certainly,
into the fullness of their hearts.
