

Noreen Shanahan

Follow the Leader

Pressed against pane
her hands claw
shift this swift burn
of exposure.

She unhinges the rusty latch
bedeviled by generations
of slapdash painters.

On the ledge
a sparrow ruffled by slaughtering breezes
pauses before skitterish flight.

A mother follows
her child's reach into trust.

Attention to swellings, bruises
tiny feet, wrinkled in warm salted water
slivers, happily garnered in play
ease to surface.

A chasm might split the earth
or maybe the softness of cedar chips
angled beneath monkey bars
catches dripping laughter.
A mother follows her child
into trust.

She studies
again this voiceless plea
for solitude.

Once blank faces
gestures of curious life
etch *eloquence*
still the moment passing.