

and you, or course, a master player.
Wide-eyed at all the faces,
seeing nothing but your own.

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PETER MURPHY

FOOTFALLS

Near the end of night or at early morning
when light rims curtains and doors
our older boy
moves through the house like a thief
tiptoeing intently through emptiness
shoving a tiny ball of sound
along the floorboards where it spins and bounces
till like a bookshelf it crashes through my dreams
and I stumble up, tottering, watching unobserved
as he scuttles back to a room with curtains drawn,
a mouse,
knowing what can happen if he wakes us up . . .
And I slip back through silence to a pillow
while light breaks in with early cries
and sputtering in the trees outside,
as he, boxed in an incandescent room,
over-exposed,
plays with toys
he's snatched
from dreams.