

## THE SHOE

A shadow burns against the wall.  
The blind shoe, fit for nothing,  
single on the hearthrug sits  
and all the lies of ageing line  
the pages of a book nobody reads.

Nobody reads. The dumb shoe speaks,  
ticking off the clock on the wall  
that says ten to. Somewhere a body  
aches for its familiar bed, somewhere  
in the sheet of night, nobody speaks.

On the sideboard all her plants thirst.  
In the side ward, running out, the drip  
to be turned off. The airbed creaks,  
syringe pump whines a click to shake  
her paper skin. The breath (wait) comes.

By the rug, the deaf shoe hears  
no pages turn the book the clock reads  
and woodsmoke hooks into the hall.  
She said she'd lost herself as well.  
Empty, the shoe. Clock reads five to.

Janet Paisley