I step over the golden retriever
lying on the curved staircase.
She looks up at me,
the golden color faded around her eyes
in white rings.

Her owner’s eyes are the same soft brown.
I noticed them
as she told me how to use the microwave oven
and about taking in the newspapers.

Her young eyes are in the photograph on the dresser
turned toward her husband’s face,
in a later photograph she stands next to him
looking into the room.

And they are in her son and daughter’s faces,
Alice wearing a black prom dress
which makes them deepen into pools.

The dining room is taking on an orange glow,
and the plants begin to lean toward the last light
which pulls them into shadows
more encompassing than their clay pots.

I avoid shutting out the lights
and ascending the stairs,
hearing the daughter’s many earrings
shake on her dresser

until I lie in the large, empty bed
beneath the down quilt,
so light I can hardly feel it,
or the animal curled against my spine.