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Mousetrap

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ROBERT WRIGLEY

MOUSETRAP

As the tongue and pall are readied into place,
and the trigger's grown gaudy
with cheese, a beautiful stasis occurs,
a sweet equilibrium: the machine,
ageless and simple, asleep on your palm,
set but unset, no repository
of malevolence or pain, just a spring's
steel memory, a swatch of painted lath;
and the cheese, the dollop molded by hand
from your fingers to the trigger's toothed grip,
is only that, until you ease it gingerly down
among the dark confetti of droppings,
among the slender curds and commas
parenthetical with disease, until
you close the closet door and it all resumes—
the wind, the sun, the pulse's long unwinding. . .