**Modern Arrival**

Scott Lowery

You’re not here yet, but we’re told you might be early,

so we’ve driven four hours, tools rattling in back,

imaginations spinning. Not here yet, but your things

have come on ahead. We find your parents kneeling

on new, milk-colored carpet among pastel folds

of your unpacked trousseau, their drawing desks

and half-done sketches exiled under the eaves. Here’s

your crib arisen on square blonde legs, bolts snugged tight,

slats measured and judged safe. A springy belt-in seat

is parked beneath two kinds of baby slings, beside a box

of color-coded bottle nipples. Your stroller looks ready

for a lunar landing, and why not—

out the window,

this strange new planet where you’ll touch down, with

its crisp gold leaves that sail and pile on still-green lawns,

acorns sized for small fists, the daily trapeze routines

of squirrels. My familial chest of chisels and saws

can stay in the car, since your future furniture’s

been engineered by happy Swedish socialists: its white

hygienic boards, its delicately grooved dowels embedded

like small bones, all of it chosen and bought with blips

of light that no one understands. These comic-style

instructions are meant to be grokked by any sentient

extraterrestrial, but what comes to mind are ancestors,

the oldest watchful ghosts at our backs, how they

could puzzle out this scene, know the shape of our hurry:

two generations, stacking, fastening, best-guessing

their best materials together like sticks and twigs

to mark this place so you'll know it, as the jigsaw shape

of your starship starts to blink on the radar, slipping

over a not-too-distant, penciled-in horizon line.