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## RENEE NORMAN

### $\frac{1}{4}$ Time in the Kitchen

heat from the vents  
centres in the kitchen:  
appliances played by hands  
in a rhythm  
lost if you don't notice  
when the dials spin  
the way the blades turn  
how the doors fly  
*Lunch is ready!*  
food marks the minutes  
of the day  
steadies the family  
in four four time  
1 2 3 *heat*  
*from her* 3 4  
1 2 *body WARNING*  
temperature too hot  
reduce time by minutes  
add more flour  
when you double the tempo  
in the kitchen  
for the congregation  
play this scale in C minor  
your mind on other staves  
each note builds  
just the odd falter  
*measure wash season measure*  
structure to this repetition  
there are memories in this rhythm  
in her motion  
the same heat from the vents  
*Lunch is ready!*

### Dusting Off Willie Loman

dirt coats my fingertips  
the telltale ink of my neglect  
one cover folded back  
the spine deformed  
like an old woman  
with a humpback

i dust off willie loman  
elevate him to the ledge  
beside hamlet king lear  
death binds them  
aristophane's clouds and birds  
hover nearby  
a character in search of an author  
i am no longer waiting for godot  
or afraid of virginia woolf

but i wonder  
as i neatly stack the plays  
rows and rows of speeches and utterances  
which i have  
lived-quoted-read-memorized-acted-analyzed-  
enjoyed  
where were all the women playwrights?  
how is it that only now  
over 20 years later  
i finally notice  
all these fine and passionate words  
were written by men

willie loman understands  
the volume of the old woman  
her back bent in shame

*Renee Norman's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*