**Rhapsody for Real Estate**

*By Ben Gunsberg*

Reel me house to house,

our bank account ready for its root canal.

Let’s wander mid-century moderns,

poor cousins of Frank Lloyd Wright,

who flunked geometry because their flat-tops

failed to shed water. We can pitch

a new roof, replace this wine-stained carpet

with hardwood. Maybe walnut,

maybe oak—either way, I’ll whack

those planks into place. You can cook,

I can clean. Picture me on my knees

scrubbing toilets beyond innocent. Sweeping

closets. How pretty your dresses will look

chest to back, wife to wife. How sleek

my suits about to board first class

to nowhere. Let’s step outside

through sliding doors: O emerald square!

O butter-haired willow where a tire swing

drops like a hypnotist’s watch. We’re ready

to sway in hammocks, eavesdrop on katydids

as Jefferson did while framing our pursuit.

Let’s hold hands and float like Wendy

and Peter from backyard to half-bath

to master bath, unafraid of headache, allergy,

gas—our tiny tribes of medicine will colonize

these cabinets. My bride, our future

draws light and shadow through these blinds,

the yin and yang of dusk, and then the need

for bedside lamps, for we must read Tolstoy

aloud before sleep, before conception,

before track lights twist their little necks

to brighten our wild-haired infant.

I write this poem for him or her, for you, for we

should have a home where time hammers us

into place, all of us safe beside eternal

spice rack and knife block, apart from cracked

cement and crippled hula hoop, a home

where we see ourselves reflected in polished granite

countertops, midnight black, eyes within the rock.

Or, if not a home, at least this poem where we walk

## barefoot across hardwood, whispering walnut, walnut, walnut.

**Self-Portrait as a Mole at the End of the World**

*By Ben Gunsberg*

I say “hawk” when asked by our children

what animal I would choose, except nights

I fear the end is near, news of chlorine gas,

missile tests, drone attacks. Those nights

I pick a mole because something soft

and harmless should survive a holocaust,

even if it means shrinking to one-fiftieth my size

and hiding underground until clouds drain

their poison and the great fires hiccup smoke

and the champion virus dulls its sword.

When sweetening roots signal a safer world,

I’ll surface, break through bone mounds

to sniff out grace. Nearly blind, I will not see

our crumbling, ant-lacquered street, blue,

luminous dragonflies haloing the porch.

I’ll snuffle through dust, pink feet padding

home, where I’ll rake my harmless claws

upon the mat and cast my small shadow on the bathroom

floor—the cold, white tiles still intact, shower cap

hanging like a dry mushroom on the brass knob.

I’ll recall, with my genius snout, Sunday morning

long ago, lavender soap, comb pulled behind

your ear, parting hair for which I hunt,

the old world still wet in my mind, like a robe

that draped your shoulders once.

***Ben Gunsberg’s*** poetry appears in *Poetry Daily*, *DIAGRAM*, and *Mid-American Review*, among other magazines. He is the author of the poetry collection *Welcome, Dangerous Life* (Turning Point, 2018)and the chapbook *Rhapsodies with Portraits* (Finishing Line, 2015). His writing has won awards from the University of Michigan Hopwood Center and the Utah Division of Arts and Museums. He lives in Logan, Utah, and teaches English at Utah State University, where he directs the Graduate Specialization in Creative Writing. He moonlights as the Multimedia Editor for *Sugar House Review*.