

KYEREN REGEHR

Lessons from Bewitched

1.

They switch off
during the episode where Tabitha
levitates a pink elephant,
or was it the one where she wiggles
her fingers and makes her toy pony fly?
We whine for our show, my sister and I,
but Dad is home, and on the edge of the sofa

he's next to Mum. Her hands shake
as she explains something about love,
and that he's moving
to a different home. Our eyes flit
between their faces and the gray screen.
Being a little older, I try to catch the gist—
nod and say, "Can we watch now,
can we?"

2.

Morning in the sun-wrecked kitchen
my mother's hands limp
in the sink, rubber gloves
taking water. My dad's face double-
knotted. Through the flyscreen door,
his string bag of soccer and basketballs,
an amoeba on the welcome mat,

his twelve-string guitar, striped velveteen
beanbag, box of sneakers, kneepads. Cat Stevens
smiles from a stack of LPs, trophies of golden
heroes kick from boxes. My sister bangs
a naked shoulder, rattling the door,
Big Bird undies sagging at the crotch,
strands of her hair snagged
on her jam cheek. I gag

on soggy cornflakes, spit a mouthful
back into the bowl. My sister,
lifted and placed in the hall like a parcel
marked FRAGILE. I slide down next to her.
We lean against the wall, our bare backs
reaping the smooth chill
of plaster, arms not touching,
watching the doormat pile
vanishing into Dad's vw van.

3.
Samantha shakes her finger at Tabitha,
explains when she can and cannot
use magic. Tabitha nods
like a good girl. Samantha waggles
her finger sweetly. Tabitha nods,
brow creased in concentration. Samantha chides,
her shiny Doris Day hairdo jiggles.
A close-up of her rebuking mouth, closer,
closer. Finally, she asks: "Do you understand?"
Nodding, Tabitha says:
"How many teeth do you have?"

4.
Inside my parent's nightstand, her diary—
words penned in blue sound
like a nursery rhyme: *I dream of a room,
and in that room is a bookshelf,
and on the spine of every book,
his name, his name.* And I read
my dad's name, laced
for half a page, lifting off
the paper like a spell.