

ANDREW GRACE

[How to give yourself an exorcism]

How to give yourself an exorcism:
walk into a house that isn't yours
in the middle of the night and take in
that warm accrual of scents—

bread, baby powder, fire, wet cotton—
but don't touch a thing. As you climb
the steps, avoiding boards that might squeal,
tell yourself you are just there to learn

what it is to live here, not to disturb
the sleeping bodies. As you move
your hand toward a doorknob, try
to tell if the tremor you feel as you grasp it

comes from your own loneliness
or is a devil donning your skin like regalia
as he licks along your nerves
and whispers *what's next?*