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## Learning to Knock

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## Learning to Knock

I learned to knock  
When the Mises moved in —  
To that vacant farm house  
On the land next to ours  
And became our first neighbors.  
I invaded their privacy.

The circumstance could have been different.  
I might have seen something more intimate  
Than faces, expressionless,  
Frozen in time like a photograph:  
Mrs. Mise posed by the sink,  
Cuffs pushed up behind elbows;  
Mr. Mise, sitting there,  
Loading his pipe with some air  
Of authority rising from his hot face  
Like vapour from cow dung  
On a humid afternoon.

I ran back out the door,  
Let the screen bang behind me.

"Knock before entering" became the slogan  
After the telephone call from the neighbors.  
Ever open-minded, my sisters and I  
Employed the idea, hanging signs  
From our door knobs, establishing boundaries.

*Amy Becker*