

Bad Parenting

Holly Karapetkova

Out back smoking a cigarette
below the window where no one can find me.

The children are calling *mommy! where are you!*
but when are they not asking for me?

In the cold my breath rises like smoke
even when I don't take a drag.

The children are beginning to worry.
The seven-year-old yells louder.

The two-year-old starts to cry.
It's only a matter of minutes before they think

to look for me here, but I need every minute
I can get to figure out what happened to my life,

sort through the details of this accident—
the fur still lodged in white bumper paint

and the sound of muscle meeting metal
then dashing off into the night.