

# Upon Housecleaning

by Joyce Gray

What if  
I locked the door and never went out?

What if  
I sat here until I withered into parchment  
until my freckles became age spots  
my hair turned grey and my teeth fell out  
leaving my mouth a puckered stretch mark;  
until this rug lay in tatters  
and the dirty dishes had long since  
been eaten by mold  
while the pile of laundry shredded  
into a stitch here, a tatter there;  
until the ring on the bathtub  
became part of the pattern  
and no hungry mouths had survived.

What if  
I thought up a chant: "Love is All.  
I am Love.  
Therefore,  
I am All."  
and wrote a book about it,  
becoming rich and a recluse, famous  
for my carrot cake with cream cheese icing.

Finally, to end it all  
as Rachel Paiment's voice  
and soar from note to note  
until  
I disappeared into the sunset  
to reincarnate as a Canada Jay  
and shit on laundry lines forever,

What if?