

GEORGE STANLEY / Two Poems

The Vacuum Cleaner

I'd almost finished the vacuuming
when the on-off switch (that had been wonky for months)
finally broke. I couldn't turn the machine off,
it was stuck on on. So I finished vacuuming
& unplugged it. Next week I took it in to the shop.

A beautiful girl
came out from in back.
I handed her the vacuum cleaner
(the power head, that is;
the attachments I'd left at home),
and as she inspected it, we began to talk
in a friendly way—about what
I don't remember, but I recall feeling
that I was not just a customer
to her.

The beauty of girls
and boys
pursues me
wherever I'm going.

Then I had to take my head in—to the clinic.
I sat in the examining room
waiting for the door to open.
Then it did. The young doctor
entered & said, "I'm Jason."

Insomnia

Papa Soul,
Mama Body,
Baby Mind.
All in one bed,
one head.

Papa wants to dream,
meet angels.
Mama wants to cook,
make waffles.
Baby wants to think,
all night,
all night long.

All night long
he kept them awake,
thinking.
Papa caught the eye
of not one angel.
Mama rose weary,
too weak to make waffles.

This is crazy,
Papa said.
It's not normal,
Mama said.
All of us thinking,
never one of us winking.
We have to get some rest!
So they shut Baby up
in his own little head

& the rest of his life
he lay there in bed,

thinking, thinking,
always thinking.
Never winking,
ever asking:

What were they thinking
when they put me to bed
in my own little head?