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KAREN ASHBURNER

## *And the Woodpeckers with Their Beaks and the Owls in the Night*

HERE'S A VERY noisy picture for our little girl. Everywhere there is sound, ticking and steaming in the kitchen, whirring and rapping, back and forth, in the basement and on your rooftop. Do you hear it, girl? It never stops to even brush its teeth or say goodnight to its mother. It does not need to be tucked in or say its prayers. It is strong and willful. It will wake you with a clank, it will grate its teeth upon your walls and the panes of your windows, dripping and sloshing. It will grow roots in your bed and scatter its seeds with the wind, its whistle so shrill, its bell going bong-bong. What do you hear at night, pretty baby? Everywhere the cows are mooing, the pigs are squealing, the hawks are screeching as they fall from the sky with their talons and their beaks. And you can look away if you want, sweet baby, but they will still fall long and hard for their dinner and the songbirds will keep chirping and singing to themselves and the woodpeckers with their beaks and the owls in the night, they all know nothing of it. Only you, only you with the big blue eyes can hear the unzipping of zippers and the moaning, the soft, quiet moaning in the next room.

*And the Woodpeckers with Their Beaks and the Owls in the Night*

There's the phone, someone wants to talk to you, dear girl. There's a train, coming down the track. Can't you hear it, pretty thing? Can't you get the hell out of the way? Can't you tell the sound of the ticking tic-toc on the clock in the hall from the click-clack of a train? It wants to run you down; it wants to scrape its shiny wheels against your pretty insides, turn you into a machine that bang-bangs through the night. It wants to see you marching in time with all the other little feet; the wind rustling in the leaves, the rain tapping on the windows. But you are not a machine just yet, you are still just a sweet apple, changing your shape every day as you hang from the tree. You are still just a pussy cat, purring and mirawing when you are hungry, hissing at the dark when you are tired and afraid. One day you will learn there are many other animal sounds you can make. One day you will find all of the sounds and make them for yourself, in your own noisy picture. One day you will roar and chirp and paw and clickety-clack like a drum; you will blow hard and long into your trumpet; you will boom and crash and wham and crunch, metal against metal, until your hands are stained red like the beak of the hawk, when the rest of have long gone to sleep, when the rest of us hear nothing but the constant ringing of morning in our ears.