

Fridge Magnet

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I doubt *They* ever gave it much thought:
that vomit green albatross
tucked slightly to the side
yet blatant, so blatantly loutish,
that offends me
because of the work I do
Monday through Friday,
or Guadeloupe
every fortnight,
respectively.

Our hands ski across the previous night:
pork chops and beef stroganoff
semi-devoured broccocoli rabe,
water soaked paper towels
and mashed potatoes in deviant marriages
with red lipstick stained stemless wine glasses
resistant to Honest dish liquid

Our hands dive through the morning
mugs clinging to cold coffee,
scrambled chunks of unhatched chickens,
burned strips of Oscar Meyer the pig,
and caked Raisin Bran cereal
deposited in a stainless-steel sink
They thought more appropriate
than the trash can and dishwasher beneath it.

We wade through shards
of his and hers skid marked underwear,
trunks, tops, kids' urine soaked linen,
these pots, pans, and things
never mentioned in the job description.

We clean:
the West Indian and Mexican
Monday through Friday
and every fortnight,
respectively.

And every so often,
staring at the fridge
I read the puke green offense
with its obscene neon pink lettering:

"A clean house is a sign
of a wasted life,"

and think of the "peculiar sensation,
this double consciousness, this sense
of always looking at one's self
through the eyes of others,
of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world
that looks on in amused contempt and pity"*

to always see two "unreconciled strivings:"

wasted life
nontraditional student life

poor immigrant woman of color
culturally rich expatriate

cleaner
gainfully employed

nanny
nurturer

all warring ideals congregating at the base
of my throat;
tangy, clawing, almost choking,
wanting, wanting more,
more than being the avenue
for someone else to live their life.

I doubt *They* ever see me,
see *Us*,
or gave it much thought
how verklempt I become
at the sight of the small, offensively loud
barf green fridge magnet.

*(DuBois 9)