

the alive world within and without I'm tight-focused on the kitchen silverware stacked in small squares first knives then spoons she's down the stairs to show me dolls she's made bodies of smooth wood found by the lake wrapped in simple dresses of felt.

Their hair,  
long yellow locks,  
knit by her tiny fingers,  
draping past  
where their feet would be.

I smile ooh and ahh place them on the counter return to the dishwasher this time stacking plates then clean bowls she's back again down the stairs handing me a bouquet of drooping flowers made of pipe cleaners green purple red I grab a vase one thrown by my mother's old college roommate—

both long gone, now.

Before I can arrange the flowers before I return to my work she's already back—

a wild horse made of sticks,  
with a long brown mane and tail,  
knit again by her fingers.

Her fingers.

I pause,

watching.

watching.

She shows me the wide black eyes, not unlike her own.

Says, "Look, mamma,

she's free."