

Another Flight of Steps

After Frank O'Hara
Emma Straub

How funny you are tonight, Ohio.
Your flashing red stoplights which call
pathetically to no one, to everyone
who is not waiting to cross the street.

Dear strip mall have you met
Fifth Avenue? Très snob maintenant,
mais oui, but there is something nice
in Ohio, a boy without clothes on

who doesn't quite like the movies
or steak or vodka or lots of things
that are without question wonderful
but he reads poetry in two languages

and who can argue with that. Oh,
Ohio, hello. I am paying homage
to your square boundaries, your
straight highways, your malls and multiplexes,

your flat chest, your pale skin patterned
by Midwestern fields, your Indians,
your wall-to-wall carpeting. Tonight
you're making me smile. Perhaps

I'll buy one of those houses along Route 80
out by the airport, with the insulation
still exposed, and cover the windows
with pictures of mountains and stand on the roof

shouting, "oh god it's wonderful/
to get out of bed/ and drink too much coffee/
and smoke too many cigarettes/
and love you so much."