

Katie Kalisz

Cement Layer's Ballet

My daughter and I rise to the pounding of nails into lumber
clutch warm mugs of milk or coffee, pull chairs to separate windows
to watch the performance flow and dry.

In heavy boots, wielding shovel, he looks limber in this graceful dance,
stirring and smoothing still liquid concrete into a cast he built
before we awoke.

(The truck behind him grunts with effort of endless pirouettes).

A high boot planted!

Shovel gliding through thick muck!

Spray of mist and morning sunlight!

Gray sea parts into orderly
lined
squares.

At the calm rhythm of his trowel strokes, my daughter gasps -
her eyes whole globes.

Applause! Applause!

The lovely blank almost
virtuous – smooth, swept and turning white as it hardens.

Then, we mar the clean flat with our hands.

Katie Kalisz is a Professor in the English department at Grand Rapids Community College, where she teaches composition and creative writing. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan, Loyola University of Chicago, and Queens University of Charlotte. She lives in Michigan with her husband and their three children. Her first book, *Quiet Woman*, is forthcoming from Main Street Rag.