

After the earthquake

by [Donna Pucciani](#) in the [September 27, 2017](#) issue

Around the table, we drink coffee
in small cups, peel oranges
with little knives. Crumbs of cake
dot the blue cotton tablecloth
like chunks of houses all over Umbria
felled in the streets.

Just when the pieces of our lives
fall into place, another tremolo
sets us afire, breaks us into pieces
where our fears multiply.
The lights flicker. Television falters.
I look up at the wooden beams,
imagine them crushing us,
leaving the house roofless
where concrete used to be.

But for now, we are safe and whole.
The sheep still in the valley, the bees
swarming in the apiary on the hill
as though nothing has happened,
nothing at all.