

Maria

Jacob Monash

Maria never quite left Austria.
The walls of her home were cluttered
with ornate cuckoo clocks,
each interrupting stale
grandmotherly air to inform her
she'd spent another fifteen minutes
in suburban St. Louis.

Between her clocks hung tarnished
photos of loved ones stuck in Austria,
smiling at memories from before the war
when her land didn't end with a rusty
chain link fence in the backyard.

While the cuckoos rested
she'd talk an English muddled
thickly with displacement.
She'd speak kindly of the old doll
in the corner, fenced off from dust
under a thin sheen of glass,
blank eyes still staring out
across green fields lit by bombs
that dropped ash on her porcelain skin

white as a child
frozen beneath the Austrian sky.