

Ode to My Ironing Board

On the day
I finally accepted
the fact that by the
time I arrive somewhere
my clothes are wrinkled any-
way, my ironing board was pro-
moted from second laundress to ma-
jor-domo of my house, no, my life—book-
shelf; drying rack; nightstand; TV tray; surf-
board on stilts; charging station for my laptop;
giant coaster covered by faded purple flowers;
the one surface I can reach but my dog can't even
on his tippy toes; aluminum shrine to the mother
chromosome; gurney for frayed socks; staging
area for poetry class: pen, notebook, prompt,
poem; magazines turned to poems I must share
with Nancy, Ruth, and the one for Michele; a
story in *The New Yorker* that I wish I had written
and maybe I should have, maybe I could have if I
wasn't so preoccupied with poetry. The iron sits
forlornly at the absolute edge, perched there like
an afterthought or a piece of art in one of those
avant-garde exhibits like the famous one with a
toilet yet he still sulks at his own
superfluosness. He isn't completely forgotten,
like the rules of my mother on the proper order
for ironing a shirt: collar first, back, sleeves,
cuffs, then the front, or was the collar last? But
what does it matter? I do iron occasionally but
it's only when I see a wrinkle so obvious it
cannot be mistaken for a pleat and when it is on
the front of my blouse where I will see it too but
because it would take too long to find a place for
all the stuff on my handy ironing board, I decide
to do the practical thing and iron my shirt while
I'm wearing it, oh come on, you know you've
done it too, you just turn up the heat as hot as
you can bear, better not bother with the steam
unless you need a facial too, quick, easy now,
ignore your husband if he catches you and asks
what the hell you're doing. Don't make up some
cockamamie story about how you seared the
flesh on your chest. Just be proud of it and
tell people it's the badge of a
modern woman.