
Cleaning Out Zaide's Apartment

YEHOSHUA NOVEMBER

— *for my grandparents*

His scent still lingered in the black heat
of his darkroom, where he spent decades
developing his meticulous world
of insects and flowers.

Boxes of slides
lay piled on top of one another.
Holding one to the lamplight,
I entered a different universe,
where moths silently cling to the stems
of roses.

In the bedroom
we found tie clips in the shape of airplanes
and then the slender, fragile model planes
he had built from scratch and hand-painted
bright blue with yellow emblems on the wings.

And in every drawer,
countless notes she had written to him.
He must have saved them all,
each one wedding the mundane to a private world
only the lovers themselves could know:
Hard-boiled eggs on the stove. I believe in you.