Empty

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A rickety door
hanging
on a broken hinge.
Shattered chain drawn
across a sinking facade.
Through the roof’s gaping cavity,
not a ray of light shines.
Rot hides
on the underside of fallen shingles.

I duck under
the splintered frame.
Spiders dangle
from frostbitten webs. Peels
of rosy paint line the floor.
Road maps to the rat holes
punched in walls.
The inside is not prettier than the facade.

I remember a time that façade
was yellow and straight.
A Dalmatian puppy burrowed
beneath a white picket fence.
Sun infiltrated the house
through the crystalline portal.
And gay whispers of wind chimes
swung from greased chains.
Outside smelled earthy
because mother composted orange peels.
I helped mother gather those peels.
We’d sit shoulder to shoulder,
shelling the rinds with sticky thumbs.
She’d make me dandelion chains
to wear like crowns.
In my bedroom I’d hide in my hangings;
pretend to be a princess wrapped
in royal chiffon.

The abandoned rooms
are overcrowded.
Stuffed with adolescent memories
of another time.
This house was full
of noise and of light.
Peels of floor tarnish, flake
like dead skin. My ageless soul
seems a facade beneath the roof
of my youth. Those days have past.
A pale copy of a time
that will never come back.