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Ghost Houses

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SUZANNE HENIG

GHOST HOUSES

Even in a quiet death
 There is a certain violence which explodes,
 Just like the silences of empty houses.

See how those houses on a condemned street
 Form a ghostly trinity—
 Chaos and upheaval rimming every side—
 And wait for wreckers who will move them
 To better sites, lusher altars
 In the names of progress, politics, urban renewal.

With inscrutable dignity they stand,
 Empty,
 Basements disemboweled, pipes plunged out of cesspools:
 Mark how just like these one day
 Man shall leave the earth,
 Not quite as silently, but with a cosmic roar
 That will violate the blameless atmosphere
 And empty every house of all its violence.

ETHEL BARNETT DE VITO

SONG

Are you the same or different, my darling?
 I do not know, I swear I do not know:
 I cannot hold that memory, my darling,
 Near enough so a difference might show.

If the grasses are less green than last year's grasses,
 The roses sweeter, or the opposite,
 The birds full of a melody that surpasses,
 The leafing willows slimmer by a bit,