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## Every Day I Take the Long Way Home

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# Every Day I Take the Long Way Home

**Author Bio**

Jamie is a bear.

# Every Day I Take the Long Way Home

Jamie Garrett

Every day I take the long way home  
past the houses that  
remind me of what it means  
to grow up under the guise of  
the “small town.”

You were always the one that stuck out  
with your dark green shutters,  
shoddy porch missing floorboards,  
scattered nails stuck up from the depths,  
dusty windows that never let me see my reflection,  
never letting out a glimmer of light from the inside.

You were a dead building.  
You were a constant reminder that  
not everything that dies needs to be buried.  
Some things need to be left alone,  
not memorialized or sanctified,  
simply left alone.

Autumn crept up on both of us that year.  
Windswept streets blowing dust  
in your direction.  
I followed your whispered screams—  
Cracking wood, smashing glass—  
to your front steps.

Swarming about, men and machines,  
dismantling, destroying.  
Standing in silence,  
me, a statue, mourning the loss.  
They took you that day and  
I can never get you back.

I have recurring nightmares about  
the funerals that I hold  
for dead buildings in my head.  
I cannot walk down Front Street  
anymore without seeing you.  
I always find you where the sidewalk ends.

These days my head hangs,  
my feet trip over themselves.  
I walk without thinking,  
without noticing details and  
you are the reason why.  
You are the reason why  
every day I took the long way home.