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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.