

## CRACKS IN THE HOUSE

Blueberries in the kitchen,  
afternoon light angling in,  
a pile of fluffy pillows,  
fireplace crackles,  
laughter,  
the smell of bread baking,  
a velvety voice humming.

In other words,  
home.

In other words still,

distant  
memory

of

childhood

unraveled

lost

## RESIDUES

Inside your house  
you have pieces  
that seem to have been there from  
an ancient time, old relics of days  
when you were happier  
and could afford to gather adornments lightly--  
when you took unwanted furniture off others' hands  
or found joy in a spontaneous find, filling up your home  
and all the while laughing, planning  
your future and moving forward, always moving forward--

until

many years later  
when you look back  
and a hazy amnesia has crept in--  
where did I get this,  
who might have  
used it before me?  
Why did I bring this into my home,  
and--  
how did I manage to forget?

The unrooted ties  
to an ever-changing past  
float around you  
and seem to change  
their color, their look.  
They are almost  
no longer recognizable  
except for a hint of  
some pleasant memory,  
some vague feeling of a past  
lightheartedness and freedom.

The clock's hands have made  
their journey a million times,

and you don't even know anymore  
where the clock came from.

## THE QUESTION OF ROOTS

To own a home--

that time-old urge of settled peoples  
(or so we call them, for after all the  
years and centuries  
they are still grappling  
with this desire and its heavy attachments)--

to call a piece of land one's own  
and build and grow it  
as one will  
(and keep and fix it  
as one must)--  
at once a privilege and a strain--

is like that other time-old urge

of monogamists

(or so we name them, for after all the  
vows and therapists  
they are still slipping  
onto the wilder slope that calls them)--

to be secure and know  
where you are,  
who you go to,  
what your lot is  
and will continue to be.

When pulled against the earth,  
its dirt and its mass pinning us down,  
and gazing out into the lightness of space  
we ask ourselves:

whose is the greater freedom--  
the oak tree's or the epiphyte's?

## HOW THE HOUSE FELL DOWN

Before the coffee was poured  
    (for then's the danger)  
the energy reserves we'd stored  
    expelled, we crashed into each other

The cups went tumbling down  
    to meet the tile--  
we thought to make a kind of crown  
    of them, with glue and willed denial

And such we did, like a pledge  
    of settled patchwork  
till pottery too near an edge  
    plunged too--and so there went another

And this predictable time  
    we didn't fix it--  
complacency, the curtained crime  
    had snuggled in and veiled the trial

From there it easily slipped  
    to larger objects:  
the furniture, and vases flipped  
    upside themselves, their shelter seeping

The walls were later undone--  
    at first a crumble,  
a little crack, a bigger one,  
    till gravity called forth a tumble

Through flakes and piles on the floor  
    we saw foundation  
that couldn't hold a pillar more  
    and pointlessly I started sweeping

Till all was finally bare:  
    we'd watched it happen--  
our home's collapse to dust and air  
    that started with a tired stumble.

## THE REFUGE

inside

a place  
sheltered from reality, hiding from  
outside

you've told yourself  
lies  
to hold  
it all together,

put

your house's roof  
on  
firm materials

a faulty sanctuary

## THE REFUGE

Note: This poem can be read from top to bottom or bottom to top.