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Remodeling

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Remodeling

September dulls the taller spiky grass.
The day's post stands between 2 doors.
Another afternoon spared rain, I open the attic again
to bring the apple breezes in,
the medicines boxed and brought to curb,
the walnut trim garaged, salvaged
along with the square nails of its century.
The remodeling begins in innocence
almost. *Meister, Heaps*. I repeat their names
and see their bodies now, as slow
as dirigibles, too many dead to count. And
this house, I think, will never quite be ours,
hearing the village noise in it, this music softened
in its pass among the arm-chairs, redirected
by lamp-glass. I tinker then to set the image
straight, to stay this course toward ceremony,
abiding the dearth or feast in it, the course
of a desert century, reading the daylight now,
building on the rain gauge, and this light building
on our neighbor's polished chrome
and his cast wheels. The water's drinking safe,
they tell me, in innocence almost,
clearing the village streets to bring in fiddlers
and dancers, opening the parade streets
for the convertibles, the attendants, queen,
the first of an evening's sweethearts
perched to tour.

Today I piece and fit this broken ribbon-work,
restore the 19-4 in it, resisting the will
that means to crowbar down, build clean,
to spill these windows down in shards
on beds of peppermint. I have this day ahead
to sort a morning's boasts
from its concessions, a day the elevator,
the tandem loads of grain, the feel of this pen
declare one time, in innocence almost,
recovered with the pistols and the gold accessories
from grandchildren. I mean to make
my way, wide of the hanging plants, down
to this basement, I believe, tall enough
for backboards, its furnace and water-heater
blocked, expecting snow-melt
and spring floods. I feel the local news take hold,
the hold of place as personal, meaning
to seal the gap-board shed, to patch and level
the stone porch that had been worry
to the dancers, feeling the spin again and catch,
of gravity, of prayer, of their voices,
behind the masks of plastering, drawing
the mind to visitors, the undertones
of the eccentric abiding story-line, and
the digressive loops of smalltalk,
holding on for love.

by Robert Lietz

