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Song

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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,

Who's to recall, excepting in the mind:
The sly, deceiving mind, so like the weather,
Mercurial, ambivalent, even blind —
Not to be trusted one day to another.

Are you the same or different, my darling?
I cannot tell. My eyes of mind, I vow,
Tell nothing, only that you're here, my darling,
And same or different, mine, at least for now.

FRANCES ELEONORE SCHLUNEGER

BUT HE KNEW ME

I walked into the wintery fields
Between the dusk and dark—
The dog that died walked by my side,
But none could hear him bark,
And none descry him there but I
Who went with loneliness. . . .

How often must the heart preclude
The entrance of despair,
And find its ease in fantasies
Too intimate to share,
Or take a wraith and call it faith,
And so by faith progress!

I wandered through the countryside
When suddenly there came
A strange lost dog in wind and fog—
I could not call his name,
But he knew me, and joyously
And proudly walked me home.