

## Home No More

Strangers carry her body out of the house  
we bought thirty years ago.  
For the first time I hear  
the tock of the mantle clock  
and smell staleness in the air.

The house still holds her dresses and shoes  
in neat order in the cedar-lined closet.  
Walls hold memories she and I shared:  
illness, Grandma's china, laughter, German dolls,  
wood-turning lathe, books, crazy quilts, tears,  
birthdays, a wedding, fiesta ware, old family Bibles  
with names inscribed and verses underlined,  
walnut sideboard, Christmas, dogs,  
acoustic guitars, photo albums, bread baking,  
chess trophies, friends, Mom's old Singer,  
diplomas, Van Gogh prints on the walls,  
two children,  
and spider webs here too long.

It's time for the estate sale, the moving van,  
and the For Sale sign  
as I lower the thermostat to 55 degrees,  
turn off the kitchen light, lock the back door  
and listen to the garage door rumble down the track.

By Arlin Buyert