4-1-1993

The Razing

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The Razing

After all this time, it shouldn't have been a surprise; it was, after all, unlivable. Parts of the roof had given up any pretense of shelter, and the world before the house was beginning to show through. Still, I could not have imagined that thirty years of life would endure so poorly, that ghosts would already stare from empty window sockets, and every wall breathe with every wind like some discarded Kenmore box, both ends broken through.

And now it was coming down. When I'd heard, I expected the gothic, towering crane, that it would take some apocalyptic wrecking ball to make such an end, this vivisection and monicide. Reality made do with one yellow bulldozer—looking especially bright now that morning was here and it could in earnest begin the few swipes from front lawn to back, dismembering perennials lying in riotous beds beneath each southern window—and a rust-pocked truck to haul it off.

Before noon, the other men unpacked sandwiches by the truck and stomped the dust from their boots; good enough men, they spoke in quiet monotone—seeing me picking amongst the limp strands of re-bar, mock oak panelling, porcelain shards—of the Dodgers, perhaps, or women they had known, the sleeker condos that would start here, then snake along the wood's edge as far as the river. The elms seemed larger now with no house for comparison; what sun came through played tricks with these open rooms, where shadows danced like half-remembered dreams.

Near the old fireplace site, the glint of glass was only a piece of photograph frame that cut my hand neatly across the palm. It would bleed till I sucked it clean.

—C. Wade Bentley