

THIS OLD HOUSE

By Charles David Head

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This old house
that I stand before
was built in this hollow
in the year nineteen o'four.
Its paint is long gone
and the chimneys are tilted
all the windows are broken
the steps appear wilted.
The front porch is sagging
the screen door is rotten
the families have moved on
this old house now forgotten.

But as I lean here against the mantle
in front of the fireplace
I can almost feel the warmth of a fire
a scent of wood smoke there seems still a trace.
The bedrooms look so huge
now that they are bare
still I can hear the voice of the family
on their knees by their beds in prayer.
Giving thanks unto God for his mercy
and that by his eternal grace
the crops did good this year
no sorrows came that they had to face.

And up the stairway to the loft
I can imagine little children's feet running
Ma, tell us one more ghost story before bedtime
and let's hope ol' "bloody bones" don't come a-thumping.
Now here in the kitchen where the flu still stands
underneath it on the floor you can make out
where the legs of the cast-iron cookstove
left dents in the rug, being as heavy as it was stout.
Cornbread, red-eye gravy and grits
along with cathead biscuits and pies of all kinds
on that old Jacob's range
were cooked once upon a time.

And up there on the ceiling
and over by the front door
are the traces of copper wire
where they ran electricity in fifty-four.
Plumbing was never installed in this house
but there in the backyard a little ways out
is where the privy once stood
now only a hole in the ground and some tin perhaps.
The water from the spring has long since dried up
the barn has fallen down
where once stood the smokehouse
is now a patch of barren ground.

Yet as I stand here in this yard
underneath a big old hickory tree
I can feel the presence of all the others
who have stood here before me.
Moms and Dads, boys and girls
grandpas and grandmas, neighbors galore
this old house may now be empty
but memories will linger on for evermore.

In loving memory of
MARY
Nov. 7, 1963 - Nov. 1, 2007

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THANKS FOR THE SUNSHINE!