Home

Sheryl Noethe

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Home

Do not let them come as sheep.
Let the wolves come as wolves.
It is not so hard to die
but it kills you trying to stay alive here.
Every morning my grampa and his dog
get up at dawn and wait for me. If I don’t come down he pulls his old self up the stairs
and the old poodle drags up behind him
They stand outside my door. Then they open it.
The next time I come home he tells me how I kept them wondering, the two of them, about if I was home, or if I was lost
and one of these days I’d come home and they wouldn’t know me anymore. The dog would bite me.
And grampa would go on watching Gunsmoke on T.V. as if I wasn’t there
But it didn’t go like that. He did actually die first and a long time had gone between us.
In the end he wouldn’t have known me, they said.
The end was hard and went on and on. I wouldn’t have changed anything. It wouldn’t have been any easier. He is the one who would not stay home.
I’m here, I’m the same as ever. The girl who lived in that room lives in it on and on, and the old man waits in front of a t.v. set with a dog. The furniture is dark with secrets.
There is a false wall in the basement stairway filled with empties, locked doors to rooms of children disowned, abandoned, decades earlier,
a dead wife, exhausted by childbirth, taken with her seventh.
Children, scrambling out a back window and a man roaring home from town. A man my mother called a demon.
Now an old man, whose old bad house I live in. And am afraid of the basement. And dream of lizards. And he sits, nights, watching Gunsmoke and patting his stinking dog.

Sheryl Noethe