

As Is

We list your home as is,
ghost ship uncaptured by disease,
slow mutinies of stuff.
Ash-pocked couch, bottom-broken chair
compressed by bridge and cocktail Saturdays,
immense mahogany antique
beneath cheap bric-a-brac.
Three childhood beds pristine, four-poster where
you dreamed, made life, and blinked goodbye.

Ignore the broker's plea
for curb appeal; no autumn mums and mulch,
no windows washed or touch-up paint,
no grout to seal the yellowed clawfoot tub
you bathed us in, initiates,
smooth bodies perfect bowls. Not one
concession to a buyer's proud
entitlement. We loom
deranged, immovable in rooms

where pregnant couples mime distaste,
gesticulate and pout,
presumptive heirs, each crack and faucet drip
announced like evidence.
Swollen frame and cabinets mis-hung, brush
to prune and runneled driveway pave,
moss-damp roof, ancient boiler jerry-rigged
until we glare them out,
regretful, exiled, looking back.

Unsold as seasons toll, the lawn
goads neighbors to complain. We trim and weed,
shovel, rake, air and put away.
Windex, Clorox, Black Flag, Lysol,
Pledge and Bon Ami. Merit cigarettes
in cellophane, still fresh.
Faint essences inhaled

you linger near, companionable shades
assuming rightful place.

The broker quits, commissionless.
We watch her ease from the corroding stoop,
depointed bricks like wayward teeth.
Inside, the bevelled foyer glass
(*So tacky*, whispered guests)
returns our likenesses but strangely dim,
too long beheld to compass space
or time. Dominion ours,
inheritors, we bolt the door.



Christopher Woods, *Awaiting Your Touch*, photograph