

Because No One Is Living In the House

my daughter's pink bike
on the training wheels
I straightened out
after her first tumble
is being slowly
covered up
as it sits
near the back porch
where the snow drifts;

no one is pulling on overcoat
and gloves
over two layers
of flannel to shovel
on Saturday morning;

no one is leaning
at night
on the swaying
tire swing
watching more snow
blow in,
smoking *Captain Black*,
tapping the pipe
on the glazed bark of the huge
maple,
watching gusts
chase the bright sparks
over the drifts;

no one listens
to the bare limbs sway
black against
an almost white
night sky;

no light
spills from the kitchen
windows;
the woodstove is cold as it is
black.

Because we have moved,
and no one has bothered
to crowd the pantry with
Bisquick, beans,
hot chocolate and Malt O' Meal,
and no TV babbles
at the foot of the stairs,
pancakes will not sweeten
the morning air;
no one will ask
to take her plate
and glass
of milk
to the living room
to avoid missing *Looney
Toons*.

Because we are gone,
the part we could not help
leaving behind is being
slowly
covered ---
tires, wheels, seat,
handles,
horn,
details become
obscured, even to us,

until we forget
things---
the hardness of
a sidewalk on a shin,
an elbow---
and know only
this strange absence.