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Living Alone (for Dan)

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Living Alone (for Dan)

Deborah E. Ryel

You make arrangements
 clean the windows
 paint the rooms yellow
 seek a southern exposure
You set up your grandmother's fernery
 a sudden burst of green
 play sad songs on the stereo
 to drift in the air
 mournful and beautiful

 But by evening
shadows creep back to the corners
water seeps in through the basement
the wiring inexplicably goes wrong
 so you pull it out of the walls
 disemboweling the house

No matter where you place the lights
 what doors you shut tight
 or with what strange machines you keep comfort
that certain darkness sleeps in each night
 to derange your morning rooms