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## The House In Roskilde

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# THE HOUSE IN ROSKILDE

Donna Pucciani

This is the house of blue rooms,  
cool walls the color of sky and sea.

A yellow photo album  
enfolds spirals of memory:  
a white-haired matriarch, one beloved  
sister who hanged herself in a cellar,  
another the sunny-haired girl whose voices  
drove her from a second-story window,  
two smiling daughters now grown,  
and a holiday flat huddled on a hill  
in the south of France.

The house is warm, hold heat  
and hope. On the table, three white candles  
on silver stems twined with buds  
and green ribbons bless the cerulean damask  
set with honey, butter, cheese, and tea poured  
from a pot the color of soil and twilight.

This is the house of blue rugs,  
dusty blue in the parlor,  
oriental peacock in the dining room  
spread-eagled on brown floorboards,  
gray-blue carpet creeping up the stairs.

In winter the lady of the house,  
dreading the long Scandinavian nights,  
takes morphine for pain, reads books  
in three languages, watches the sky darken  
thickly, shattering into shards of snow.

Her husbands the schoolmaster,  
eyes like gray doves,  
takes her tea and toast in bed  
then cycles to school to fight  
for the union and teach recalcitrant  
students the vagaries of English grammar.

In summer she bikes down the lane,  
glossy hair flying in the wind off the fiords  
that float ahead in fronds of mist.  
Spinning down the cobbled coast road  
she passes the village church and the fisheries,  
buys a bag of apples at the market  
under skies of white-hot noon.

Their lives mesh the way canals  
web the city in nets of water and light,  
the terrors of November wind lingering  
into February trances that melt finally  
in the evening sun of June, summer's  
ubiquitous optimism holding them captive  
in the nightlong cooing of doves  
woven by the beak of the blackbird  
nesting in the ivy, whistling past midnight.