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Sanctuary at Paul's House

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SANCTUARY AT PAUL'S HOUSE

Daniel M. Gannon

The face of a house only a grandmother could love
as she blinds in her rocking chair, hearing doorbells with a twist
while facetiously rotted wood bargains with the caked
grey nails for their support and empathy.

In the living room Bo Diddley is Jesus, and His picture sinks
no lies, worshipped like some gothic fire on a used and
splintered mantelpiece as fragile as a sand castle.

A box of curiously strong Altoid mints sets abandoned
on a register by dusty, dog-eared *Tribunes* scattered on the floor
almost as evenly as the guests, who stare as if they can
see all of my previous addictions. Light to the space
is focused from a red lamp that denies any sunlight traces leaking
through the drawn shades stretched from the only window pane.
Every step has a stutter and every stutter has a creak
past empty beer bottles and choking ashtrays
and stains in the well-worn carpet breathing memories
of neanderthal vomiting and careless games.

I hate these walls as they ache and relax with the noise level, weaving
and revealing the Ramones in a power chord haven,
but I keep coming back to Paul's to sit and look and slide
with his useless friends, thinking about how the thin lines
of salmon skin in the sunset are erased by hands much larger than mine
and how the Beatles changed America.