Closing -- 3243 South Calumet

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His room was on the second floor—more advantageous view of the street. He demonstrates the pocket doors, shows me a secret drawer in his closet, explains when the roof was replaced, wiring updated, fireplace converted to gas.

It’s been decades since his dog Mengis left those scratch marks on the hardwood floor and chewed away two banister rungs and a chair. The claw-foot tub there in the basement is no longer hooked up to plumbing, just too heavy for him to get up the stairs.

It seems his family moved here when he was a small boy. I imagine some seventy years of place related events cascading in on his stoic demeanor as I pepper him with questions. Yet I am left to surmise which room his mother might have died in, why his siblings only now have required the sell, by what high jinks he acquired the scar near his mouth, or how well he might have known Adelma from the brownstone three doors south.

Final walk-through with both realtors—my last chance to inspect the place, first opportunity to bond with its history. At the title company, while papers are being passed around, he speaks of his first job when he was five. For a dime he sat on stacks of newspapers in the wagon while his brothers delivered to each subscriber in the nearby apartment building. On hot summer nights the families would grab a sheet and sleep out in the park that used to be across the street from the row-houses and had an inviting set of swings.

The signing complete, he hands me two sets of keys, one on a worn leather ring.