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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 Adelm
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.

MAUREEN FLANNERY

