

12.

## House Prompt

Let today's poem talk about house or home— your house or another's, or house as metaphor.

### First House

We bought a house made of mud and straw.  
Thieves stole my sewing machine  
and my turquoise ring.  
They stole your music, and the needle  
you lowered with one steady finger.  
To lose these things. I learned.  
We had a little girl  
and I never let her out of my arms.

Summer nights we sat on a moon-striped  
back porch. Later I hung out  
laundry in the snow, glorious whites.  
Clothespins clung to the wire,  
a flock of house finches,  
breasts to the sun. Like a needle  
we rode the world as it spun,  
working our way to the center,  
song by song.

Connie Wanek  
from *Rival Gardens*

### My Hut

after Tran Quan Khai

Built long ago, old  
sills rotting in mud,  
filled now with soft ash  
from a thousand fires that warmed me,  
ash settled indelibly  
on these books, never  
to be clean again,  
and on these shoulders  
and hands.

Hayden Carruth  
in *Collected Shorter Poems 1946-1991*

Work

This is the house  
that must be entered,  
the house whose doors  
do not lock,  
whose walls are shadow  
of moving trees,

the house whose table  
is heavy with food  
already blessed,  
waiting under  
the mouths in need  
of food and blessing,

the house whose windows  
were polished until  
they vanished,  
whose moon and sun  
once painted there  
moved inside,

the one whose chimney  
breathes a visible  
breath at night,  
the house whose walls  
must be swept  
with the wing of a bird.

Paulann Petersen  
in *Wild Song: Poems of the Natural World*  
edited by John Daniel

The moon is a house  
in which the mind is master.  
Look very closely:  
only impermanence lasts.  
The floating world, too, will pass.

Ikkyu Sojun  
translated by Sam Hamill

...This is the bright home  
in which I live,  
this is where  
I ask  
my friends to come,  
this is where I want  
to love all the things  
it has taken me so long  
to learn to love.

This is the temple  
of my adult aloneness  
and I belong  
to that aloneness  
as I belong to my life.

There is no house  
like the house of belonging.

David Whyte  
final stanzas of "The House Of Belonging"  
in *The House Of Belonging*

Emily Dickinson never left her house after the age of  
thirty. Why should she leave? She was reinventing the world;  
she needed to stay in one place.

Jean Houston

### **At Home**

Far is where I am near.  
Far is where I live.  
My house is in the far.  
The night is still.  
A dog barks from a farm.  
A tiny dog not far below.  
The bark is soft and small.  
A lamp keeps the stars away.  
If I go out there they are.

Linda Gregg  
from *All of It Singing: New and Selected Poems*.