

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*.