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Gifts

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Now this last house so newly ended
Where the generations sat,
The grandparents and the children,
The kitchen caverned deep with pantry,
The windowed sweep of rooms,
The turning stair, the tallness,
The bends in hallways
Like a heart turning an unintended corner—

I will sit in some uncommitted place
And let memory dust old furniture
In vanished houses.

ROBERT SWARD

GIFTS

Every day is Groundhog Day,
Omens and signs. I will not move,
I am stopped in all my ventures.
Great things are delivered by close friends.
The friends are troubled. They come
With gifts. They present them badly.
Surrounded by gifts, anxious friends
And wives, children wailing
I make once more my peace with the world.
Am I at last beyond distraction,
No longer contemptuous, inconsolable?
A trial to wives, my children, my friends?
I step out into light, the day
Look about casting shadows
Left and right. I turn, amazed,
Walk off with them
Back into the world.