

What Happened at the House on Colquitt Road

by Savannah Barker

An old, worn down
White house
Just about five
Minutes down Colquitt,
A road I drive down frequently
To go to my father's house.

The setup of the home
One you don't often see
With a large elevated
Back porch
And a small elevated front one,
Just about the right size for rocking chairs.
The house seemingly small, but one
I always dreamed of as being cozy.

What history does that old house
That I often imagine myself in, hold?

I've seen cars parked outside,
Countrymen with wide smiles
And rolled up flannel sleeves
Dreaming of what they could
Make the house be
(Like I so often do),
Yet still year after year
I only see the paint more chipped,
The wood further warped and worn,
The home less homely.

I know what draws people to it,
But what drives people away?
What is the hidden history of this lonely house?
I often imagine a small family of three:
A stay-at-home mom
Who enjoys sitting on the porches
And reading when the weather is nice;

A young boy
Who loves to wander through the woods
But knows to avoid the road
Where the people speed
And do not watch for wandering children;
And a dad,
A towering father who works a
Nine-to-five
Coming home often exhausted
with only a cold drink on his mind:
A family dynamic that used to seem comfortable
Now known to be set up for failure.

I see the father,
Scuff shadowing his face,
Coming home from work on a Friday night
Tired, aggravated, wanting a break.
I hear the buzz of a TV clash against
The crash of glass against the floor
Of the kitchen tile.
And then his boots.
His voice louder than the disruption itself
Shaking the crying child before him.

I see her robe move across the kitchen
As she comes between the man
She used to love
And the child she would do anything for,
And I hear the heart-breaking sound
Of a man who doesn't know
How to control his anger.

She's done,
Doesn't even bother to pack a suitcase,
Her hands immediately sweeping both
Child from the floor
And keys from the counter.
I see headlights flash across the house:
Its white paint not yet chipped,
Its boards not yet warped to moan,
And I hear the hum of the engine

get further and further away
Quickly drowned out by his voice
Echoing through the surrounding woods.

What happened after that one night
That he made a mistake
That changed his life?
Did he lose his job
And spend his days alone
Drinking beer
and watching clips of his
used-to-be happy family,
a now unfixable dream?

He left the house behind
when he died
to only be loved
and pondered over in passing
By those who try to change the past
And those who question it
Like me.