
House

If a house settles in the middle of the forest
and there's no drum to hear,
do the trees take up arms?

In an old barn
well-tamped by the hindquarters of my brothers,
past our stalls
and where we groom
not so diligently,
the walls have ears.

"Sakes
alive!"
So is the house

or was.
Human remains
clog the drain with grey bubbly
in the shower
around our soles.
We don't care.

In disrepair
from lack
of care we
see the bones of our house

through a puncture wound
surrounded in pink flesh
covered in cellophane
like a toy.
Seethe,
bones of our house.

The bones
filled with life,
a marrow

that has sprung free.
A ragged nurse with a mophead
waits in attendance
to stop the flow.

the ears, the bones, the blood,
the spirit
the lice
who crawl around their host in large hairy bodies
big with legs
under platforms and beds,
body lice
looking
like brown recluse,
under the gaze of
the spirit.

“Sakes Alive.”
Listening with my eyes while I
breathe
down the bottomless
hall.
Not a light
in sight,
but flushes and gurgles

of an untended appetite.
The spirit.
The spirit
of the lumber maybe,
who knows,
is up and about.
I can hear

the house settling,
talking to the spiders
that make Matt squirm.

Matthew Burden