

# My Grandparents' House

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It was an ugly yellow house on the corner of Silver Street. Paint fell off like scabs; you could scrape it like spring ice from your windshield. My dad had gotten it and the shack next to it for a song. My grandpa would fix lawnmowers with his rough hands worn from decades of factory work. He would carefully clean and assemble the smallest carburetors. I could never understand a word he said. I wish I could have understood the rattling high-chested slurs with which he spoke. Inside the house my grandma would smoke up a storm and watch *The Price is Right*. She was a wise-ass from the Kentucky hills. I always felt like she wanted to go back there and away from Marion, Ohio's cold comforts. I'd hear her stories about hopping the creek to get to the outhouse, stories of cold winters around the potbelly stove. She would call us "good doggies the milk bone way" or "rats" when we stole her chair in front of the TV. I lie here in the guest room, the traffic light outside showing on the wall: green, yellow, red. The thump of Hispanic music outside, the yip of tires, and a gunned engine flying into the night soothe me, but I know those noises would make my grandparents wish they were home and not in this house.