

## When We Moved, Everything Went

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Amidst TV screens and fluorescent lights,  
across the room on an old maple desk  
passed down from grave to grave,  
mom would keep a sepia portrait  
riddled with dust—  
a distant grin, a distant name—  
idly awake with the rest of the knickknacks, german bells and rows  
of ceramic painted birds  
no one ever liked.

(saint barbara song sparrow, ivory  
billed woodpecker, pinguinus impennis  
etcetera, etcetera)

They all waited for a glance,  
recognition from a two-thumbed rat  
on his way out the door.

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When we moved, everything went  
into a box neatly stacked between  
bubble wrap and report cards  
littered with remarks we forgot  
the day before. We taped it shut  
and in sharpie wrote, *stuff* on the side  
as if it were accurate enough.

But I saw it—I saw it get swallowed in the rearview mirror as we distanced ourselves  
from our world, inching away from the past.

We left the old portrait,  
the knick-knacks, the birds, the bells—  
the steam-powered trains  
the books, the names, the wars.

I saw as we put it all behind  
as if yesterday never happened  
and today was eternal.