

## THE OLD HOUSE

We wanted so much more from life.

The porch falling in the middle,  
The chipped and scarred paint,  
The cracked window glass.

But it took something we didn't have

Maybe a faith  
In the game, or the system,  
Or a belief that everything was alright.  
And we both knew everything was not alright.

For her, it began early. Being tall. From the woods. Shy.

She was eaten alive in her high school.  
And religion – orthodox, conservative  
Couldn't do what the others did.  
Often didn't want to, but there was a secret longing.

For her, it was cruelty. Or insensitivity. And it was  
Everywhere. Not in everyone. But there seemed little one  
Could do to avoid it, or them, the cruel ones.

For him, it began late. In the army. War. A medic, hospitals. Bodies.

Suffering – not physical. By then it had ended for the wounded.  
But mental. Loss of limbs and love, self-respect a phantom.

It was cruelty, too, and insensitivity. And, again, not in everyone.  
But how many someones does it take to allow a war to continue?

So they began searching and changing.

She for quiet, simple honesty.  
He for courageous truth.

And in each other, paradoxically, they found what they sought.  
For her quiet, simple honesty was the most courageous of truths,  
And his courage to speak was merely a face painted on a well of simple sincerity.

And so they wed. And walked the road together. Finally coming to rest on the porch,  
Falling in the middle, with the paint scarred by heat and cold,  
And the cracked window glass, like their lives,  
Only a slight imperfection in an otherwise perfect world.