

Mid-Century Modern

At the entrance, two sets of stairs
forced an immediate decision:
step up onto hardwood,
an invisible corner,
an uncertain hallway,
or down a narrow carpet
of steps swallowed by shadows.
Avoiding the stairs altogether,
a left turn led to a room crowded
with mahogany, an air
of abandonment floating among
the chairs with high-backed curves
and heavy legs; opaque corner windows
hinted at a view.

A mid-century house with no center;
compact rooms in a horizontal row
strung along the hillside,
like a corridor one hurries through
on the way to somewhere else.
The dying chi could never penetrate
the sharp, staggered
right angles, the obstacles
of so many walls;
the life force diminished,
dissipated in the wasted space.
You and I lost our love
in that dimly lit maze
of bad feng shui.

The split-level design doomed us
from the start, foreshadowing
hidden fractures. You introduced
me as your current wife,
with frequent mention of your last wife.
Your ego demanded detailed
disclosure—the 1980's world tour
as guitarist for an artist famous then,
the second house on an island with air
like a warm caress –
but your social nature changed inside
our front door. You migrated downstairs,
incinerating false promises
with bitter cigarettes.

Now I find myself archived as your fourth
former wife, the last entry in your bio.