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Dennis Ross

Julia's House

A fallow field now, steps down
to her storm cellar with the double
wooden doors missing, a trash pile
with a 1901 postcard to Julia Aden,
and a small piece of white siding I save.
The ghost of Jet, her black cat, stares
from the dark hole of the storm cellar.

All else erased: the three-room house,
the porch floor, carved with my
parents' names, and "1935," inside a heart,
the wood-burning stove with cookies,
the kerosene lamp pink with red
cherries on the forbidden parlor.

Julia's pioneer stories of Indians and
of hunting prairie chickens as a young
girl for family food still drift in the air.
Nothing else left, only the memories
of three small children now in their
eighties who listened enthralled.

Dennis Ross taught and did research in physics at Iowa State University. His poems have appeared in many publications. His chapbook *Relatives and Other Strangers* was published by Finishing Line Press.