Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Writing Prompt: Haunted House

Charity Hume · Wednesday, October 29th, 2014

A special Halloween edition writing prompt from Charity Hume. BOO!

Whether it's the Bates Motel, or the stairs down to the cellar where you once saw a snake, some houses remain with us as spooky, mysterious, or "haunted." In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Jem and Scout run by Boo Radley's house rather than be caught there after dark, and they touch it only for a "dare."

I can still remember finding a ruined hunter's cabin in the middle of the New England woods on a hike when I was a child, and seeing that a rusted rain barrel had bullet holes where it had been used for target practice. A house after a fire, an abandoned barn, an overgrown and forgotten cemetery, a dusty apartment filled with magazines from decades ago, places like this speak to us of forgotten stories and whisper haunted messages from the past.

In this exercise, use your memory to think of real places you have visited that stirred your fear or curiosity about the people who once lived there. You can splice together the memories of different spaces, or commit to one, describing elements that most intrigued you.

Take a walk through the rooms and describe the feeling you have as you let your mind travel back. Your memory may surprise you with its powers to retain specific details. Try to stay physical as you write and use all your senses. Rather than write: "It was scary," describe the moment when you first spied that rusty meat hook dangling from the barn wall.

The Old Fairbanks House, by Childe Hassam, (1884), courtesy of Wikipaintings

This entry was posted on Wednesday, October 29th, 2014 at 12:58 pm and is filed under Film, Fiction, Poetry, Visual Art
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.