

# *The House with Nobody In It*

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track

I go by a poor old farmhouse  
with its shingles broken and black.

I suppose I've passed it a hundred times,

but I always stop for a minute

And look at the house the tragic house  
the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house,

but I hear there are such things;

That they hold the talk of spirits,  
their mirth and sorrowings.

I know this house isn't haunted,  
and I wish it were, I do;

For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern

needs a dozen panes of glass,

And somebody ought to weed the walk  
and take a scythe to the grass.

It needs new paint and shingles,  
and the vines should be trimmed and tied;

But what it needs the most of all  
is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money

and all my debts were paid,

I'd put a gang of men to work  
with brush and saw and spade.

I'd buy that place and fix it up

the way it used to be

And I'd find some people who wanted a home  
and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty,

with staring window and door,

Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish,  
like a hat on its block in the store.

But there's nothing mournful about it;

it cannot be sad and lone

For the lack of something within it

that it has never known.

But a house that has done

what a house should do,

A house that has sheltered life,

That has put its loving wooden arms around



a man and his wife,  
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh  
and held up his stumbling feet,  
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone  
that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern  
along the Erie track  
I never go by the empty house  
without stopping and looking back.

Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling rook  
and the shutters fallen apart,  
For I can't help thinking  
the poor old house is a house  
with a broken heart.

~Joye Kilmer