

The Liminal Space

I am leaving for college tomorrow and
I am afraid that when I return home next
my bedroom will feel like a doll house.

I am terrified of doll houses.

Homes are supposed to
laugh and cry, open and close,
shuffle and expand, illuminate and darken,
pulse and sleep.

Nothing ever changes in a doll house.

This room in which I have spent a third of my life,
in which my body has generated a third of itself,
in which I used to escape my parents' dinner parties,
in which I've whispered to friends
under the covers with the lights off at 2 am,
in which I've endured six months of Zoom classes,
goodbyes, and disorienting orientations,
is *my* space,
and it changes when I do things like
dropping a pencil on the floor
and finding it some months later.

And so, when I return home from college and find that hoodie
I last wore three months ago still hanging from my
cupboard door knob, my bed unnaturally well made,
and a thin layer of dust on my bookshelf,
I will come to realize
that my old bedroom belongs not to me but
rather to some past version of myself,
trapped in time by the graduation photos on the mantel
and in my parents' wistful embraces,
in whose space I am some passing guest,
whose questions I can answer,
whose fears I can assuage,
whose hopes and dreams I manifest,
but whose anticipation of the unknown I envy
and whose bedroom I want
but will never again have.