

1979

White House

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Recommended Citation

Daly, Kathleen A. (1979) "White House," *The Angle*: Vol. 1979: Iss. 1, Article 14.
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1979/iss1/14>

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Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: Spring 1979.

Death Watch

I always thought
A death watch by a hospital bed
Would be accompanied
By gliding towers of starched efficiency
 compassionate and strong. . .
I thought of serene peaceful acceptance in quiet surroundings
Instead, I found
Human mounds as confused as I,
 uncaring
Laughingly caught within themselves
 than in this tragic happening.
I never thought final peace would be disturbed
 by the ceaseless flow
 of chattering visitors in a semi-private room.
I never realized a death
Could be such anguish
 so slow
 so wasteful
 so sad.
I never realized I'd forever associate
The smell of baby lotion
With my father's death.

—Nancy I. Wise

White House

White house, stained grey like an old woman
By the hot black breath of the asphalt dragon,
Stands alone between four red-brick chimneys,
Steeple to a god now laid to rest
Beneath the four-lane tombstone.

—Kathleen A. Daly