Home is Home

I imagine myself home sometime soon.
The key sticks a bit in the lock.
My parents are gone.
The clock on the fireplace mantel
clicks away the seconds.
The refrigerator hums in the kitchen.
I hear voices in the bedroom, and I go in,
expecting to find my parents talking, about
how Onkel Wolf went to visit his son after
he married and moved to another town,
and how he wrote a thank you note saying
he had a wonderful time, but
das heim ist das heim, home is home,
and how my father loved to be home
or in his garden, and how he carried
stories of home with him
all the time, and how they weighed
him down, pulled against his skin –
Kristallnacht, Dachau, and das heim
ist das heim, and that home in that
small village in southern Germany
isn’t there anymore, and neither
are his father, mother, sister, brother,
and I pull up the shades, and begin
to clean out drawers, closets, and
das heim ist das heim, the voices are still
there, rising over the hiss of steam heat.

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