

## Downsizing, the American Dream

Boomers let the days go by until they cannot change  
a light bulb, too old to lift or climb a household ladder.  
One day all of them will find themselves out of control,

no power, can't make the light fixture work from  
a toggle switch. So they talk to people their age, ask  
how to handle darkness, closing doors to useless rooms—

and learn by those who have gone before them what to do.  
They sell the Chevy at bluebook, empty the two-car  
garage of more than wheels, their bodies frail and fragile,

stiff and slower to mow, plow, garden. They look about  
the yard, garage, house—pull wardrobe from stuffed closets.  
Proud Marion plans to donate her late husband's army

uniform to the local university, looking to see it on General  
Waverly in *White Christmas* next year. Hidden by years,  
a son's forgotten Eastons await that chink of pitched balls.

Kerr canning jars fill dust-laden boxes, untouched since  
summers ago. As days go by, they'll discover closed doors  
offer no window views. Time-lost-children have left a trail

of golf trophies, sealed Upper Deck box sets, a letter to Santa,  
handmade Mother's Day cards, signed yearbooks with grade  
school portraits that mean nothing to anybody, even them.

—City of Moscow Poet Laureate Susan Hodgkin

“Downsizing, the American Dream” was written for the third Third Street Gallery exhibit program called “Downsizing,” scheduled Thursday, November 2, 2018, for the collection entitled “Stuff, What We Collect and Why.”