

## Blessing for Coming Home to an Empty House

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I know how every time you return,  
you call out in greeting to the one who is not there;  
how you lift your voice not in habit but in honor  
of the absence so fierce it has become its own force.

I know how the hollow of the house echoes in your chest,  
how the emptiness you enter  
matches the ache you carry with you always.

I know there are days  
when the only thing more brave than leaving this house  
is coming back to it.

So on those days, may there be a door in the emptiness  
through which a welcome waits for you.

On those days may you be surprised  
by the grace that gathers itself within this space.

On those days, may the delight that made a home here  
find its way to you again,  
not merely in memory but in hope,

so that every word ever spoken in kindness  
circles back to meet you;

so that you may hear  
what still sings to you within these walls;

so that you may know  
the love that dreams with you here  
when finally you give yourself to rest—

the love that rises with you,  
stubborn like the dawn that never fails to come.

—Jan Richardson