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# How Strange the Words Sound after She's Gone

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How Strange the Words Sound after She's Gone ·  
*Jim Gauer*

To be perfectly honest I awoke this morning thinking  
About cows, about the word *cows*, a thought that it seems  
Was already hungry, though at the same time content  
To follow itself around in a neat little pasture  
For most of the morning, contemplating the grass  
On a non-existent hill.

Or maybe I awoke with a new way of thinking  
About *elm trees*, that's what it was, I remember the thought  
Seemed to think it could feel its own shadow  
Growing thinner, it already seemed to feel it was  
The shadow of what it was.

I awoke this morning beyond a doubt in the shadow  
Of what was, and to be candid about it began to consider  
How narrow the road is, my fast-moving thought about prepositions  
That stands watching its own path curve away  
going over a hilltop, leaving me  
Where we were, in a strange rolling countryside  
That has lost all capacity to think  
Its way *out*.

Frankly, until this morning, I had not seen  
Cows and elm trees get lost here, wandering stupidly  
In my words for them until they wound up  
In my words for them, with no way out.  
Until this morning, when she left me, I had never seen  
How empty *our house* looks as the words for a thought  
That left me, a thought that left behind it  
Only the perfect words for it, as empty as these rooms.  
This morning, in fact, I woke up empty, with just the words  
She left me, with just those words, and a thought  
About vacant houses that seemed to see  
Only its own reflection as it stood in the yard  
With the last of the elm trees, hoping for one last look  
Through the window of its words.

What I am trying to say is that I awoke this morning  
Trying as strange as it sounds to say  
How strange the words sound as I try  
To say them, as I try to say

*How strange the words sound* and that's just  
What I say. So many empty words!  
This morning I woke up in one room of a house filled  
With words, filled with the word *words*, my small vocabulary  
In a strange new language, a language that is itself  
A large empty house to which, in all honesty,  
I am slowly adding rooms.