

## **Gentrifying the Plague House**

The only thing left in that room  
is the fever.

It sits in the corner,  
humming to itself,  
speaking only Spanish when it chooses  
to speak at all.

It squats in the corner,  
where there was a crib, maybe,  
or where a soldier's cot was  
hastily dragged.

It becomes a lugubrious buddha  
when I enter the room.

That is when it is slippery  
and weighed down  
by the faces of children and vagabonds.

But when it shows itself,  
and you are the audience,  
it is something like a harpy, yes?

Like something from a Salem headstone?  
Something that flits and flaps wildly in that  
dingy corner?

It grows wings for you,  
because in the presence of the madre,  
it knows its sins and only wishes to escape.