

END GAME  
(After a print by Sylvia Spencer Petrie)

Two houses end the street.

They are squat--  
with square, block chimneys  
and black windows--  
like minds  
without thoughts.

Inside them, float the faces  
of rag dolls  
who are doing a strange dance,  
bouncing against the ceiling  
like balloons.

The houses have no mouths, no throats,  
no tongues,  
so it is not they who are making  
that crying noise.

Ignoble and implacable as fate,  
they crouch  
in their blind squalors,  
like questions  
without answers,  
without doors.

They are waiting  
for what they know  
will come.

They are at the end of a long, narrow street,  
hunched in their cubes of dark,  
waiting.

There is no other way.