



**ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORIC INVENTORY FORM**

40. (cont.) Description of environment and outbuildings. Expand box as necessary, or add continuation pages.

It used to be quite the imposing fortress — painted all black with red accent trim; the front porch buttressed with storm-sky stone walls. After my parents divorced, my mom's parents softened things up, opting for a sky blue color that remains to this day. But growing up it was a warning. The basement too was black and red. Bright red shag carpet & wooden walls stained soot. A full black bar, black stools. Red glass vases and candle holders. The old rotary dial tv collecting as much dust as my grandma's collection of miniature white porcelain cats starkly posed around the black stone fireplace. The sitting room upstairs was no less intimidating despite its white carpet and blue walls. That same black stone load bearing wall up here featured a large black velvet painting of a ship at sea being tossed around on a stormy night. The ceiling was vaulted with dark batten and beam. I felt safe here. I felt protected in this lair, in this hull. I felt comforted as a child by depictions of vampires, necromancy, the dark arts, villains plotting their plots. When you are confronted with a monster, after all, you learn to fight fire with fire.

41. (cont.) Description of primary resource. Expand box as necessary, or add continuation pages.

I'm thinking about if I wasn't the boy in the garage, or the latent girl, but the shell. & what if I was really the sun tea, steeping. & what if it is a spectrum anyway — either way a thing filled, either way a thing warmed through. & how I tried to hold gender distinct from rural knowledge but I was wrong. Gender is agrarian — seeds planted, harvested. We cultivate it. The only real gender binary is you either come into yours fast or slow.