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## THE OLD HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY

John Ashbery

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### **Abstract**

The walls are whitish. Is it cold enough in here? No, it's the statuary I came to see. And the gizzards, you wanted the gizzards too? No, it was buzzards I'd mentioned in my letter of introduction, which you seem to have lost, but I was reminded too of ancient blizzards that used to infest these parts. Ah, but gizzards breed sapience, there can be no other way. Allow me to pass in front of you while I keep you waiting in the draft that is colder than the room it besmirches.

# John Ashbery

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 it's the statuary I came to see. And the gizzards, you wanted the gizzards  
 too? No, it was buzzards  
 I'd mentioned in my letter of introduction, which you seem to have lost,  
 but I was reminded too of ancient blizzards  
 that used to infest these parts. Ah, but gizzards  
 breed sapience, there can be no other way.  
 Allow me to pass in front of you  
 while I keep you waiting in the draft that is colder  
 than the room it besmirches.

Now we can see eye to eye, and it is a good thing.  
 I would not have thought it easy to set off the smoke alarms  
 had we been closer together.

*"Now*

is the time for escape, you fool!"

Don't you see it another way, back in the furrows that bore you, that  
 nature knitted for you?  
 I don't know but something keeps getting in the way  
 of our orderly patrolling of these rooms.  
 I suppose it's that I want to go back, really ...

And so you shall, on the 7:19. Meanwhile examine this bronze.  
 I'll get Biddy to set out the tea-things  
 and that will save us some time.