Palliative and Supportive Care

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The First Time

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Poetry/Fiction

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Old friends asked if the house felt empty
I'd say no
it bothered me
I didn't know how to tell them everything was the same
just a little different
I felt guilty realizing this
the house was the same
the yard was the same
the dog was the same
but I could feel things nowadays, an evolution from detachment

I talk to myself a lot now
not because I feel alone
that passed quickly, the vestigial tail of an extended death
but to replace and restore my voice
my energy
instilling my thoughts in my home
I sometimes would convince myself it was a liberation out loud
a coup d'état
I thought about Che Guevara

My niece was too young to know
too young to care, nor should she
yesterday she brought back some tadpoles from the pond outside
in a jar, they jutted aimlessly through the murky water
"look what I have!" she had shouted
eyes and smile wide
before the jar slipped from her hands
a dozen tadpoles entering into a foreign territory
it was the first time I had laughed
laughing and crying and laughing and crying
no longer worried about fixing things

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