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## The House I'll Soon Give Up

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# The House I'll Soon Give Up

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*Nitasha Kaul*

*The poem seeks to upset conventional common sense about the desirability of property ownership. The root word "property" echoes not only of possession but also deprivation and appropriation, and a mortgage is literally a death-pledge. Not owning a house, if you can, or not wanting to, if you can't, is seen as madness and irrationality. Yet, defying this economic logic can be a way of affirming the temporariness of life and the strangeness of marking space through capital. Having never lived in dwellings that I "owned," I still "own" those dwellings through the deeper ownership authored by the memory of experiences there. Another context of the poem is the British obsession with "housing market" viewed with an outsider's eyes. "Market" is presented as an abstract article of faith. In an economic boom, people are constantly tutored on TV how to climb the property ladder by whatever means, and now, in a recession, before government plans to help those losing their homes were finalized, house prices started rising again to the delight of the property owners.*

**Key Words:** Property, Market, Memory, Capital, Space, Time, Commensurability, Mortgage

Property is theft, so I rent  
flats over cities, views.  
I rent spaces in time.

I'm moving, yet again.  
Mortgage is a death-pledge.  
They talk on this island of  
property ladders as if dwellings  
were meant to perch precariously  
in a climbing moneyed space.  
There are ladders in old attics,  
in dusty libraries, on pasted  
cardboard games where snakes  
can bite. I climb some  
in my dreams.

I'm moving, yet again.  
The market is good to sell  
I was told, I must go.  
Market is a myth, a metaphor,  
an undying illusion you see  
of radical commensurability.  
No line between people and things,  
only capital's calculability. Imagine  
there's no housing market, try.  
Bazaars are markets. I visit some  
in my dreams.

I'm moving, yet again.  
Afraid of memory, of standing  
too long by windows and doors,  
of creaking floors that tell me  
I'm here in the now. I want  
no place to be mine, no haunt to  
possess, deprive, appropriate me.  
Memory re-members, tries to belong.  
Restless, the leaf, still mounts  
the wind. I am one  
in my dreams.

### *Acknowledgments*

*This poem was read at the Uni-Verse Celebration of International Poets, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Bath, United Kingdom, on 14 May 2008.*