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Poem: "The Farthest House"

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²Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* (New York: Bantam, 1974), p. 171.

The Farthest House

*In my mind's farthest house,
I lie in quilted down, zipped up the side,
and watch for airy children of my mud days
running up the stairs and down,
pressing fingertips on painted walls,
wetting lips against my cheek.
I answer with jumprope chants,
see myself, as I was then, in the middle,
jumping higher, faster,
tripping on the rope arc,
falling on cold concrete
until Mama carries me upstairs,
draws flowers on my knees.*

*Under the tallest spire of that house,
in the largest attic,
I grew sweaty, tall, and smart.
I learned which thoughts to tuck
in cedar chests between white tissue
and which to hide in musty closets
behind the outgrown dresses.*

--Carol Carpenter