

*TLC Writing Prompt: by Maxine Linnell*

## **Construction**

Close your eyes, and think of a building. It might be a mansion, a hut, a cabin, a house, a bothy. It can be a building you know, or one in a story, or one you imagine. Write down what you see. If you like, you can draw instead.

Focus in on the details: the colour of the door, the grain of the wood, how the light falls through the windows. Are there curtains? Is there furniture? Is the building square, rounded, made of bricks or wood or mud? Is the roof thatched? Is there a roof at all?

Explore each room in your mind's eye. What's inside? Go ahead and touch the surfaces, explore all the nooks and crannies.

Now let your building be a person, a friend, a character. What is the mood of the building? What does it reveal to you? If it were a person, what would she or he wear? How would they move through space, speak, or smile? How would you relate to them, and them to you?

Now write your building-character as a poem, or as a prose poem. If you need a prompt to start, start with a pronoun (he/ she/ they).

For this exercise, you don't need to worry about form, scansion, rhyme, or any specific literary device. This isn't about technical skill. This is about letting things be more than themselves. They are anyway, but we don't always notice.

## ***Example***

My building was a shed, a shed I know. It's on the next page. You may or may not wish to read it, before or after you've written your own poem.

## Shed

The shed sulked in the garden, naked and roofless.  
Her windows smashed at an all-nighter, she slumped.  
She was irresistible, ripe for rehab. A roof,  
kisses of paint, a rain butt and a gutter made  
the most of her. Now she's the epitome of shedness:  
a climbing rose and honeysuckle trail above her door.

Inside she hasn't changed. She's still a mess.  
However much she's cleared, the unwanted things  
creep right back, scuttle into corners, hide  
under tarps, disperse themselves and droop.

She's a slut, that shed. No good smartening her up  
or giving her an education. She'll always be down and dirty.

She'll lean back on the cobwebs, look you up and down.  
She'll break your heart with that rotting toothless smile.