

## Autumn Housecleaning

We're cleaning house,  
but it's not spring cleaning;  
it's autumn cleaning –  
the autumn of our lives.

In our minds, we've cleared away  
notions of boundless vigor,  
prospects of doing it all,  
with endless time to do it.

We've admitted a loss  
of get-up-and-go.

Out go the trail maps  
of hikes anticipated,  
but never taken,  
of exciting terrain  
never explored.

Clear the shelves of books  
meant to be read or read again,  
when there was time.

But the time never came,  
and now we know  
that it never will.

Give them to the library;  
maybe someone else  
will do better.

Dispose of a photography course:  
it was never completed,  
and, anyway,  
digital has made it out of date.

Bundle up the notes  
for books unwritten.

Recycle the travel folders  
for trips not taken.

Forget the thoughts  
of strenuous sports  
and adventure cruises.

Wood and hardware  
for projects never completed:  
bag them for the trash man  
to take away.

Give away the patterns  
for quilts unmade.  
Goodbye bread maker:  
store-bought is good enough

The cleaning's done.

What we did:  
we'll keep the albums  
to rejuvenate  
our happy but fading memories.

What we'll do  
remains to be seen;  
perhaps, the best  
is yet to come,  
but it can't be as long  
as the years gone by.

Milton Crum  
January, 2007  
Alpine Lake