

# Living Alone

by Crow Jonah Norlander

This morning as I stepped out of the shower I was hit with a panicked fit in which it became urgent that I rid my flesh of each drop of water that burdened it. Not quite like the feeling of being covered with ants, each drop was a fiery portal to my tender innards, into which seeped a tornado of spicy humidity and alien oxygen. An itch all over. Outside and in. I was reduced to trembles, too shaken to towel myself down. I stood stunned and dripping, soaking the bathmat. The beige tiles collected puddles in the corners of the room, darkening the already dirty grout. Wadded tissues and shaved stubble swam. My spasms ceased as the ticking timer on the antique wind-up ceiling vent reached its own end. The sensory shock was over and I was able to move.

The only towel I owned was bunched on the floor, so I resorted to squeegeeing the moisture from my skin, wringing my limbs, preparing for the chilly trek to my dresser. I tread lightly hoping to avoid scaring any water from my body and onto the already well-worn hardwood floors. The thought of slipping didn't even enter my mind.

Having used yesterday's brown button up with growing armpit holes as a makeshift towel, I pulled on a pair of pants and was mid-reach to the closet handle when the fire alarm started to sound. On my way to knock it from the ceiling in the kitchen I noticed the microwave light on and the tray rotating. Light smoke was emitting from the sink, the oven, the cabinets, the refrigerator. I hadn't smelled any fire.

I ran outside and found deep grey clouds showering meaty rain drops on neighbors clustered under black umbrellas, eyeing me from the sidewalk. Smoke billowed from the roof. Sirens approached. Someone must have reacted quick enough to maybe save most of my house. The ringing in my ears gave way to rumbles.

