

His house

by James Knight

His house incubates memories. As he sleeps, they hatch.

His house is neither here nor there. It occupies a space between watchfulness and insomnia. Grey birds nest on its roof.

His house is a refuge from everything except himself. The floor, walls, roof are fat with him. Water from the taps smells of him.

His house is his world, but he can't articulate what that really means. Perhaps he doesn't want to think about it too much.

His house is a little provincial theatre, in which he, his family and friends enact a thousand gentle farces.

His house is home to thoughts that scratch at the windows and gnaw the wallpaper.

His house has its Grand Guignol moments. Fortunately, he is always there with his marigolds on, to dispose of the evidence.

His house is more past than present and more present than future. Ghosts smile weakly from the mantelpiece.

His house is a menagerie, in which the big cats fight the apes. Most visitors don't notice, sipping their tea while battle roars.

His house is a mirage. He climbs an air staircase, sleeps on cloud.

His house is a nuclear weapon, at the moment of detonation.

His house is a cage. He has given himself straw to lie on, a bowl of water, a car tyre to swing from. In the evenings, he reads Baudelaire.

His house is an alien world. Knives whisper in drawers. A cat activates and deactivates randomly. Rain taps importunately on windows.

His house collapses around him every time he goes to sleep. As he wakes up, it reconstructs itself.

His house is more than words, less than the ear that hears them, the eye that reads them.

