

Old Vibrations

by Matthew Robinson

She's worried about fire. There's always a sound, something triggering the fear. "Is that creaking from the fan all right?" and "What's ticking—no, not the clock; *that* ticking—what is it?" I admit that I do not know the origin of these sounds and therefore cannot estimate what they portend. We listen together for an agreed upon yet unspoken amount of time before resuming our game of dice. "Did you know this game was invented on a yacht?" "You don't say." She wins. I say let's play again; she says she's tired. Three hours later, we're still awake. She's reading Bradbury, his prophecies on burning, quietly worrying, and I'm sitting nearby holding a book like I don't know what to do with it, and maybe I don't. I hope for continued silence, or at least an agreeable sound to perhaps drown out the next objectionable one, but this is an old house, and old houses like this might very well consist of nothing but these kinds of sounds. The thought occurs to me that I have spent my entire life trying to remember things I probably never knew, and then I begin to worry, too, as I cannot seem to stop thinking about how, when we first moved into our house, the lock on the bathroom door was on the outside.

