

Editorial:
Abridged 0-100:
'From Under the
Floorboards'

If the home is broken, does that mean it is smashed like an egg? Cracked like a mirror? Splintered like a doorframe? That it's faulty, like a watch? Malfunctioning or defective, like a toy? That it's beaten or despairing, like a human mind? Or interrupted, like the home is a sentence you're trying to get out? That it's broken like a rule, like the house is a law? Like the home is a promise? Or broken as in solved, like the home is a code designed to keep things hidden from some, known by few? Or broken as in broken down, like a word you're learning to spell? As in shattered, exploded, its meaning scattering in every direction? Broken as in a lock? As in something unleashed?

The home was always a construction. That is, something we made up. Ecology knows the home is nothing but relationships, roots stretching farther through the dark than we'll ever see. The floor is an imaginary bottom-of-things, inching our lives from the soil and the street, from the chill of everything that lies beneath, all of its knots and reaching. Just as there are cracks in the walls where the light gets in, there are dark spaces under the floorboards. Here, the shadow of our lives – of our domestic belief, our day-to-day – snakes and threatens like a flood.

Under the floorboards is our past and our future. It's somewhere to hide, out of time, out of sight. The dark is where you can be blind. The dark is where you can change shape, become anything you like. From under the floorboards, home can be no more than a dream, just a slow and persistent leak. Under the floorboards is both bunker and grave. Small parts of ourselves – our waste, fears and secrets – drop between the floorboards in a quiet flurry of loss. The house is a prerequisite for haunting. From under the floorboards rise the mutterings of what we have buried, or pocketed, or closeted, or planted into the dark like stray seeds.

Nature schemes. Pests nest. Poison lingers. Treasure loses its memory. The dead become flammable. Bones become fuel. Monsters sprout from the spores of arguments. Guilt grows heads like a hydra. Nostalgia fattens off scraps in the silence. Neglect tick, tick, ticks. Dust rustles its banished archive. Hatchets glitter under its muffling. Buried hearts choke, choke, choke on their own tales. Childhoods – hidden or hiding – floss and swell like webs, alert to the slightest of movements.

If the home is breaking, broken, blown entirely away, all that remains is under the floorboards.