

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Love the House and its Crow

a 20 minute timed exercise

by Jamie Moore

We'd lost everything really. In material terms at least. Isn't that what they say when folks talk about money. Particularly them very English folk, say anything but the actual thing lest it signal bad taste. So we say material, material possessions, material wealth and so on. Material, like touching cloth, but never pushing through.

And that's why Gina, her boys, and me and Zella found ourselves moving from one rental to the next. Unable to buy our own home, at the mercy of the new English landlord, the one's building their empire with cheap cash, chasing the material dream. And treating folk like they're worth less than the cloth.

Getting Zella and them boys settled was hard and made us brittle. You haven't got a chance if you're not settled in a place you can call home for more than a few months. Gina said to me, baby you and me, we can live under a table. And I knew it, I believed her. But with them kids it just aint the truth. Seeing them signalled my failure daily - I knew I was stealing a piece of their childhood and every day it stole a piece of my being.

Gina had courage though. And faith. Said something would turn up. One day she had me meet her at this place, it was a mansion or something, a grand old home from another world, a world when landlords were bona fide - ancient gentry, folk that made it open they were raping folk and chiselling their souls. When I asked what are we doing here she said, take it easy baby, this is the place. I couldn't understand it. For that kind of money. How? It had a ram's skull above the door. I liked that, reminded me of every one horse town in Alabama.

But baby there's a catch, she said. What's that? Well there's three homes in this here grand old dame. And that's why the price is cheap. That wing over there, the south, he has a laboratory or something in there. So? Well he makes drugs hun, and not the over the counter kind. He plays country rock. Loud.

Can you live with that? Love the house and its crew, baby?

How long can we stay?

It's his place baby, we live with it, he'll let us stay forever. We get 8 rooms.

Just as long as he shares the blow. I'll end as I started but I'll watch them kids grow. Blow by blow.

I got you baby.