

## THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

The house is crumbling to pieces, teetering over the edge of the raging sea below. Abandoned by humanity, soon it will fall. But before then, we tentatively cross the threshold; our sense of adventure fueled by an acute surge of adrenalin pushing all caution aside. The side door has no hinges but is propped up against the opening by the last inquisitive people. We slide it out of the way and step inside as the rotting floorboards squeak in protest beneath our feet.

Our sight slowly adjusts to the pervasive darkness and objects shimmer into shape. We are standing in the kitchen, around a work bench in the middle of the floor. Someone has left a rusted butter knife on a blue porcelain plate. The tap over the sink drip drops water quiet. The stove is burnt out; a family of rats has made their home in the belly of the oven. They skitter away freakishly as we move about. The smell of decay makes it difficult for us to breathe. There is mildew and rotting wood at every turn.



*A.M. Owen*

We are confined to exploring on the ground floor; the steep stairs to the bedrooms have fallen away, leaving a great gaping hole and precariously sagging bannisters. Walking from the kitchen into the lounge, we see a small child's tricycle. The peppermint green paint is peeling away like a layer of skin. Old newspapers litter the floor where there once was carpet. We crawl out onto the front porch through a low window, jarred open.

The sea calls aloud as the house creaks out a response; low and unhurried. Their wordless exchange becomes mildly hypnotic. We clamber off the porch and make our way back up the headland. Every now and again, our legs trembling from the steep ascent, one of us looks back and sees the ocean wave's rise and curl, rise and curl, coaxing the house into a chilly forever-embrace.



*Val Cave*