

Night Listening

By Nancy Martz

A faint whistle stirs me out of a dead, dreamless sleep. It has rhythm and sudden nearness. I hear it again, louder. Instant alarm pulses inside me and my eyelids pop open, useless in the flat dark of night. I fight the urge to spring out of bed. I think of the lamp and reach for it; then I rule it out. I lie motionless. I stop breathing to listen against the slamming of my heart. The whistle stops just as abruptly and I feel my mouth go dry. My neck is cold. I know the blue light from the clock radio weakly outlines me in the bed. Whatever is nearby can see me. The fan whirs from the ceiling. My lungs beg for breath. I want to gulp air, but I open my mouth to take it in slowly, soundlessly. I get the nerve to lift my head inches. I look at the dark openings to the bathroom and to the closet and to the doorway. I turn my head slightly to see the window. I stare adjusting to the night, wondering when the whistling will return and what it will bring with it.

Then I lose control of my breathing and inhale deeply through my nose. A distinct whistling emanates. Oh. It is I. I blow my nose and go back to sleep.