

Of Such Is Made the Stuff of Nightmares

I can hardly believe that we did such a thing, but I know for certain that we did, yet still the memory of it is hazy as though perhaps I have tried to drive it from my mind in an effort at self preservation, turned my mind away from the very thought of it—the way you avert your inner eye from the recollection of a brush you had with death.

I ask myself how such an action could have actually been put into effect. Why, I also ask myself, is it only now, years later, that I have suddenly come to wonder how it could possibly have been that among us there was not a single clear head, no voice of reason to halt our madness in its tracks?

No, dear reader we didn't kill anyone and no animal was harmed in the commission of our folly. In addition, I must add that, indeed, by chance our lunacy was of no consequence in the end; a kind fate delivered us from the cataclysm that we willfully tempted, from the dizzying fall from the crag upon whose razor's edge we dared to dance our mad jig.

And so I now must tell you what we did. It is this: we left two oscillating space heaters on inside the house.

Yes, I am aware that I disappoint you, for this may not seem like a matter of great importance. But consider this: the house was abandoned in the northern Arizona woods with the heaters set to high and unattended for months. Months. *Space* heaters of the kind that have set endless fires and burnt to the ground countless structures and taken lives without number. *Unattended*. Infernal machines raging and blazing full bore in a house in the forest a three-hour drive from the closest of us.



One of the very heaters we left on in the house

Strangely, as I reflect upon this, I cannot remember why this was even done or imagine a single sane reason why it should have been. Oh, we didn't want the pipes to freeze during the Flagstaff winter. I know that, but why was it that we didn't do

this time what we had always done before: winterize the house by draining the pipes and pouring a little antifreeze in the traps and toilets?

I don't know. My brother basks in denial, insisting stubbornly that none of this ever happened and I myself am commencing now to think it's best to cease this reflection altogether.

So, I'll conclude this now asking only how any of us could have slept a single night with the knowledge that we shared—for truly of such is made the stuff of nightmares.