

ABSTRACT

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Ten Impossible Things Before Daylight: Collected Essays

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Ten Impossible Things Before Daylight is a collection of essays which turn on experiences with the uncanny, including premonitions, visitations, bizarre coincidences, impactful dreams, and lucky charms. My essays seek to explore a side of the uncanny that is not horrific but instead, eerily invigorating. The lead-off essay “Goodnight Noises” is an uncanny elegy for friend that I knew since childhood who tragically developed severe schizophrenia. My essay is about making sense of his somewhat mysterious disappearance and death. “Far and Wee” is the story of the unplanned rescue of a baby goat that my wife and I found in an ocean while on vacation. Our rescue of the goat led us to many moments of prescience regarding the birth of our firstborn son.

The collection is a varied and confessional portrait of my evolving sense of the uncanny and its influence over the red letter days of my life. It also celebrates Cleveland, new love, and old friends, and seeks to surmount and memorialize the loss of friends, a serious illness, and the zombie-like horrors of the moment, gun violence at home and a war in the middle-east that, unlike the soldiers fighting in it, seems impossible to kill.

“Canary from a Coal Mine: Reorganizing a Sense of What is Possible in Uncanny Nonfiction, is a critical introduction to the essay collection. In it I seek to establish some strategies for working with the uncanny, a concept frequently associated with fiction, in creative Nonfiction. My essays picks up Marjorie Sandor’s notion of the uncanny as a

genre-busting “viral strain” and uses it to examine the differences between the uncanny in fiction and in life. From there, it observes how those lived examples are represented by nonfiction authors, with the aim of re-enacting uncanny experiences in the minds of readers.