

## Noisy House with Tiny Lights

My desk chair squeaks, and so do the beds,  
the doors, the floor.  
The windows rattle in the wind.  
Still, it's a solid old house where we feel secure.  
And it's small,  
so we hear each others' squeaks and rattles,  
and -- our choice -- no TV masks the sounds,  
so we perceive the subtleties,  
the messages the sounds we make are sending.

Our house is also full of tiny lights.  
When all the big machines are off,  
they still signal their potentials:  
In the middle of the night,  
I roam the house.  
The LEDs are waiting, visible.  
Green on my and Phoebe's and Nick's monitors and printers,  
Yellow standby on the computers themselves.  
Green on the power supply.  
Dots on the clocks.  
Someone left the microwave flashing  
white zero and colon (*cookus interruptus*).  
Red ones: The answering machine  
blinking three messages as yet unheard;  
the fire alarm reminds us  
every forty-five seconds  
that it works, it works, it works.  
And there's an orange one  
on a phone that's charging,  
And an amber one on the stereo,  
just telling us it's standing by.  
They're tiny lights, unobtrusive,  
like the barely noticed flashes in our wakeful eyes,  
but each has its message for us,  
and in the middle of the night,  
when there are fewer squeaks and rattles,  
and the rest of the family is asleep,  
any one of us can awaken  
and pay attention to the tiny lights,  
as I'm doing now.