

### **... from 'The Other Half'**

My house is the left side of a pair of cottages on the edge of the village. Turning left to the sitting room, left to the kitchen and left to the upstairs rooms is like living half a life.

I had an idea it was odd to face a bookcase and the wall night after night. I sat sideways reading or listening to music as if I'd discovered the last seat on a bus. I imagined lifting the roof and seeing my neighbour doing the same thing the other way round. It was ridiculous. Semi-detached people, one turning left and the other turning right. I thought I should move the furniture to see how the other half lives.

When it was done I tried out the chairs which felt different for a while, but not different enough. Programmed to turn left, I wondered if anything would change if I turned right instead.

My neighbour leaves for work at exactly 7.40; the music stops and he bangs the door so that everyone knows the first phase of his day is complete. He keeps a key in the rockery. It was no trouble to let myself in by the kitchen door.

Carolyn Carter