A Tape for Tuesday

The tape started with the sound of a door. Lucas had known that sound since he was a child. It was the latch of the house they had sold on Tuesday.

He wanted to find his mother's voice. He rewound the tape several times before he could make out a sentence. “Leave it there,” she said. Then came a noise he had always thought was the end of the recording.

That afternoon he let the tape run. The sound came again, and this time he recognized a chair scraping the floor. He heard his mother laughing and someone asking her why. She said she couldn't remember.

Lucas never knew who had left the recorder on. He stayed until the reel stopped by itself. In the house he remembered as always full of people talking, there were several seconds of silence between two voices.