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Review of Song for the Unraveling of the World

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The title story in this collection follows the frantic efforts of a father to find his missing daughter. But is she missing? Does she even exist? Evenson (Immobility) lures the reader into each twisted tale by beginning, not at the beginning, but...somewhere else, creating a sense of disorientation and unease. As each tale unspools and each surreal world clarifies into a malformed sort of logic, the creeps set firmly in. Solitude links many of the stories and that being alone serves as a principle source of terror: alone in outer space, alone in a house with a ghoul, alone in a delusional nightmare. These are contemporary tales of science fiction, horror, and fantasy told in unpretentious prose, yet are reminiscent of the heyday of pulps like Weird Tales, home to writers like H. P. Lovecraft. Indeed, one story, "Lord of the Vats," even quotes an incantation from Lovecraft's "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." The one exception to this unsettling collection is Evenson's hilarious send-up of the hypersensitive trigger warnings found in today's college syllabi; beware flaming ghosts, colostomy bags, and other off-beat literary devices. VERDICT: Readers of horror fiction will not want to miss this one.