Jerry Spinelli makes a dilapidated house come alive in *Maniac Magee*

“Maniac had seen some amazing things in his lifetime, but nothing as amazing as that house. From the smell of it, he knew this wasn't the first time an animal had relieved itself on the rugless floor. In fact, in another corner he spotted a form of relief that could not be soaked up by newspapers.

Cans and bottles lay all over, along with crusts, peelings, cores, scraps, rinds, wrappers—everything you would normally find in a garbage can. And everywhere were raisins.

As he walked through the dining room, something—an old tennis ball—hit him on top of the head and bounced away. He looked up—into the laughing faces of Russell and Piper. The hole in the ceiling was so big they both could have jumped through it at once. He ran a hand along one wall. The peeling paint came off like cornflakes. Nothing could be worse than the living and dining rooms, yet the kitchen was. A jar of peanut butter had crashed to the floor; someone had gotten a running start, jumped over it, and skied a brown, one-footed track to the stove. On the table were what appeared to be the remains of an autopsy performed upon a large bird, possibly a crow.

The refrigerator contained two food groups: mustard and beer. The raisins here were even more abundant. He spotted several of them moving. They weren't raisins; they were roaches.” (Jerry Spinelli *Maniac Magee)*