

Clint is an extremely gifted writer of fiction. This semester we've been focusing predominantly on his short stories, but he is also in the process of penning a fairly extensive novel. The selection included here, "The Door," speaks to the effects of obsession.

~Lindsey Katerzynske, Tutor

The Door

By Clint DrewsKolb

Outside my bedroom by no more than ten feet is a door. This peculiar door rests above the stairs. It is not for walking into for it is no more than a foot and half tall. The door is above the stairs to the sunlit basement where the spiders and mold live. The space behind the door cannot be much for I know stairs to the highest level rests above. It must be a small place forgotten, for I asked the landlord what was behind the door and he answered, "I do not know, I've never checked." I wanted to ask the landlord more but he was preoccupied with putting cable through air ducts. He was already doing an odd job so I decided not to bother him with more of my odd questions.

I can see that door every time I come through the backdoor. It greets me every time without tone. It doesn't say hello or goodbye or bon voyage, it merely says, "I exist here and only here." Which only brings more mystery to what is behind the door. For no other door speaks to me in this house of brown. It carries some importance, as a guardian of some great good or evil. It's a guardian that has entrusted me with its location. None of the other tenants even notice the door, for it only reveals itself to me.

Once I lifted the veil upon the door so a friend of mine could see it. I talked to him about how I wondered what was in it. He offered to break the spell and reveal what was behind the door. I persuaded him away from action, telling him only I am supposed to open the door. It is either a trap, treasure or nothing for me and me alone. It sounds like greed but it is not, it is my responsibility. It is my duty that I am to open the door.

In the early days before the other tenants occupied this house, it was a cold dark house. I would shiver in my room with nothing but the passing cars as sound and I would sense something behind the door. I would imagine a dark beast living behind the door. It had curled itself up tight and it waited for me to be unaware. It had a mask of vivid contrasts. Bright green, bright red, purest white and darkest black. It would click and clack its sharp rending teeth, it would cackle waiting for me to go to sleep. Its body was naked and of silky black, it had obsidian claws akin to a mountain lion. It would haunt my day dreams, seeking to drive me to madness and folly. It was trying to make an opportunity to strike me while I was weak, but it was foiled when I locked the doors surrounding my bed. It was not the first evil essence I've dealt with, as a child I had to fight one that lived in my mirror and shower. It no longer lives behind the door. It has since sought easier prey.

I have a theory that something is hidden behind the door. A guilty relic of a troubled life. I imagine a small web strewn space where wolf spiders claim dominance and are ignorant of the object amongst them. A knife resting in the center and pointing northward, parallel with the

door. Decorated upon this knife is dried blood from a murder never solved. The door concealed its presence from the investigators and from the murderer who sought to burn his tracks. The murderer was driven from the place and took everything with him but the meat freezer in the basement. It happened in the '60s based off the design of the meat freezer.

My friend that I mentioned before theorized that there are just mundane things behind the door, like cleaning chemicals and light bulbs. Before coming here I would agree but as I already said the door is not normal. It holds a power of its own. A normal door could not conceal itself in the open. It would not speak. And it would not start calling upon me to open it. I feel it even now, a subtle call. As soft as the wind from butterfly wings but as consistent as a mountain. Bit by bit I am more and more tempted by this gentle call. Sometimes when the sun is down and the moon is high, I'll stand barefooted before the door and stairs resisting the call. The unknown is a scary thing, a thing I'll be overcoming soon. For I live in the house of brown and Carpe Diem. I must as the aspiring lover take my opportunity before favor goes elsewhere. Tomorrow I will open the door.

I feel the gritty dirt press against my naked feet as I go down the wooden basement stairs worn smooth by use. I try not to think of the spiders who must be angry after my fellow tenants' attempts to cleanse them with aerosol and bleach. Now is not the time for outside influence, thoughts or ambitions. I set aside this entire afternoon in approaching the door, I ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches while listening to music in case the evil beast still resided behind the door. Or if the wolf spiders living inside attacked me when reaching for the knife as I stole the relic they had looked over for generations. I would need the strength should the worst happen. I carry only one thing, a sharpened plastic shingle from a house I once called home. I would not need light for the open backdoor brings in the sun.

I reach up to the door and touch upon its smooth and dusty white knob. I notice for the first time small chips etched out of the door. It is worn and abused. I let my fingers feel the gritty old dust and pull upon the door. Nothing happens, the slow and eerie opening of the door does not happen. I give it a less reverent pull but once again nothing happens. Then I use my whole weight to try to open the door. I try a couple more times but no avail. I look upon the door for the first time up close and notice how unremarkable it is. It is just a door, one of many and no longer do I feel its call. Although, I was not one to leave a mystery easily, so from the basement I look into the area behind the door. I discover the quite unremarkable discovery that the door leads to the air ducts. The same crude air ducts that the landlord had sent the cables through in the days before. I could open the door with a crowbar but I think this rabbit hole has turned out to be nothing but a facade. No more than mythology reduced to nothing in the light of the day. I have better things to do than ponder about some worn down door leading nowhere.

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