

Storms at the Door

by D. Joseph Hetzer

My feet vibrated as thunder shook the house. My house and the yard outside were cloaked in an insufferable blackness broken only by the occasional flash of lightning. The trees swayed in the wind, and their limbs scratched at my windows. The doorknob jingled as the unwanted visitor was at my doorstep. I did not want to answer the door; I did not want to leave. A vague memory of my husband floated through my vision, how I wish it were him visiting me now, like the old days when we were young. My knees shook and I stumbled to the couch where I laid down on my back. I placed my hand onto my chest and all I could feel was a faint beating trying to make itself heard within a deep chasm.

The doorknob stopped moving, and a slow knocking began on my door. I shut my eyes as I lay there wishing he would go away. The knocking continued and grew louder. My mind began to wander through the past year in my life. My husband had left me and took what little we had with him. My pension was little to by on, but we had leaned on his. I decided to take some time off, so I went here, to my sister's vacation cottage in the mountains. So secluded and away from everyone else, it was the most peaceful I'd ever been. So I stayed. And stayed I did for many months. The slow knocking grew faster into a volatile banging and I feared the hinges would give way. I sat up with my back straight and stared at the door which began to shake as the knocking grew in ferocity.

I had run out of food, but never mind that, I found some nuts just outside. I didn't need much else, but here the visitor is, trying to take me away from this wonderful place. I heard a crack in the door frame. I shut my eyes as a series of cracks and tearing sounds ensued. Then silence. I opened my eyes to see a dark and shadowy form in the doorway as the door lay on the ground. No person stood there, rather simply the opposite; there was Nothing. Nothing stood in the doorway, with the outline of a person. In the Nothing a visage of everyone I once loved took form: my husband, who had already

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remarried and moved on, and the kids and grandchildren, who never visited me. They faded in and out of the Nothing and eventually they all disappeared, replaced once again with Nothing. I stood up and walked towards the figure as it beckoned me.

I stepped just outside onto the doorstep. The Nothing placed the door back into its frame. I stared at the cottage. The lights were off, and it looked like I had never been there. And with that, I stepped out into the storm with the figure, out of this world, with no evidence of my existence being left behind.

