

A Locked Door.

by E. Kirsch

My landlord told me that the closet in the bathroom has been locked for five years now and he lost the key. He says it's an old door and he'd have to tear down some of the wall. I look at that wall, it has piss-stain yellow paint and water scars from several years of leaky pipes. I say I wouldn't mind that, if he took out some of that wall. He says that it really isn't worth it.

He says it's just a fucking closet, the fourth time I ask.

For some reason it bothers me. Not knowing what's in there. I could focus on other things. I guess I'm a little distracted. I blame the weather- because it's sunny or because it's rainy.

But I guess sometimes I just think too much. That's what I'm told. Alina just said that the other day. She told me to stop thinking so much or I'll go crazy.

But it's like an infestation; I have thoughts crawling in and out of the different sectors of my brain. I tell Alina they're like these cockroaches that are scampering underneath the carpet and between the cushions of my couch.

I call the landlord and tell him if he isn't going to take out this door then I'll do it myself. I tell him I've been thinking and counting and writing down the violations of all the health codes of this pathetic apartment. He grunts and says he'll be over and take the god-dam door down.

Alina says I should have just left it be. She tells me I do this all the time; just pester people for the fun of it. Alina is one of these cockroaches. I tried to crush her with a shoe one time and unfortunately I missed.

She seems to squirm out and then back in to her hole just as I began to believe she had finally left. Some times she stays out in the open, just daring me to come. She thinks she knows it all because she can climb on walls and shit. Sometimes I wonder if she is watching me in shadows and cracks, waiting till the moment I am

far enough away and then Alina comes out and whispers, "You can't get rid of me."

The landlord knocks at my door. I open it and he is holding a crowbar.

"Let's get this over with."

Alina was real once, but I'm squishing my memories of her one by one, then she'll be nothing but that fucking cockroach and eventually I'll squish that too.

I am removing the day we went on a bike ride and it was the morning. I'm poisoning the cool feeling of dew, the wet gravel that landed on my legs, and the crackling spin of our wheels. I've trapped the smell of cows and wet hay, as well as Alina's figure in a blue tank top and the small line of sweat at the curve of her back. They will soon starve off. I'm swatting at the orchard we passed. I've fumigated the way home and the car that honked and Alina's middle finger raised high in the air.

He has successfully busted the door open. There is a shelf, a toilet plunger and a few cobwebs. It is a small closet, not even a foot deep. He asks me if I'm happy, and then he leaves. I see a cockroach, I'm not sure if it's her or not, but this time it doesn't escape my foot.
Crunch.

