

Hammer Had

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

They say I'm supposed to see everything as a nail, but I have a silver head. Too soft for bang-bang. Too soft for anything but sitting on a shelf. I sat in her classroom for twenty-five years. She was proud of me and pointed often to the words inscribed on me that I can't read. You'd think she would have taught me. In her classroom, they dissected fetal pigs, and from the way the students held their faces, I was grateful to have a claw and a knob instead of a nose.

I never killed anyone, or split them open. One day, when her hair was as close as it would come to my shade, she took me home and set me on another shelf. She never pointed out my inscription again. At first, nobody came, and then the people who came were mostly concerned with moving her and sponging her, and finally with taking her away.

I gathered dust. More people came. They took most of the other things that were in this room. I was set on the carpet and the shelves removed. Light and darkness passed, then passed again. Those of us who were left were thrown into this box. I don't know what comes next. No one else in here can talk.

