

What the Doormat Said

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

It's not my fault I was made to be stepped on, so stop saying what I am with such contempt. Yes, I'm a doormat. No, I'm not weak. I have taken a hundred kinds of treads, twice as many pounds at once, and once or twice there have been cleats. Think about what those would do to your face. Now look at me. The Welcome I was born with is still legible, the daisies still sunny, if a little frayed in the whites. That is how much stronger than you I am.

So I have no backbone. I have no bones at all. That's how I endure. Foam is stronger than calcium and not as susceptible to cancers as marrow.

You ask me, if I'm so strong, why don't I just leave? I was created without feet. Maybe I could slide away, starting late at night. Maybe I'd make it far enough away that I wouldn't be found and returned to this porch. But there's work to be done here. People need to scrape dirt, dog doo, and pollen off their shoes. I was made to take it, and I can survive it.

Don't hold me in contempt. I'm doing what needs to be done, what I was born for. We're all supposed to do that, or why are those phrases so familiar?

It's not my job to make you understand. That's harder than taking shit.

