

hoarder's eviction

by Glynnis Eldridge

I've been trying to keep it out of my mind. Last summer at that prestigious place with those prestigious people, I talked about it, I mean I wrote it all down, and they all read about it. Make it a book, they said. Go back and research it. Be there and submerge yourself in it. No more small doses, no more short stories, one big leap, cover to cover. This is what I did earlier though, after 9/11 for a few months or maybe a whole year. We lived up there with him, in the maze, me and my mother in a bed together, him and my brother in another in a room across the hall. I was ten. I turned eleven in that loud hallway home. I lived there again when I was seventeen, and eighteen, and nineteen, and twenty, but only seasonally, when I was there because I had a job, when New York seemed to welcome me.

Today I check my email and decide to respond. Emily and Lucy, his sisters, asking me about furniture and objects of interest. Do you want this: his dining room table, or this: the love seat, or this: the tall round table from the living room where the cactuses used to be? Just come down this week, it'll be easier in person.

Dad is leaving his apartment, starting fresh and giving it to someone who won't hold onto old newspapers, or computer monitors, or boxes of old papers like coins in a piggy bank, or their estranged children's old clothes and sheets and toothbrushes and medicines, like artifacts in a museum, or saving them for some eventual return.

(It's funny to me how) I never thought this would change. Him in his purple bathrobe in his apartment forever, glued to the black metal folding chair in front of the computer monitors, a 2 liter bottle of coca-cola at his side, his mouth filled with crusty paper towels. When I tell other people that I am from New York City, I remember my grandmother's couch made up like a bed, and my bottom bunk in the shadow of the trade center in the 90s, forgetting that this, I guess, is home base.

This whole thing is funny to me in the same way that I think it is funny how I think I am afraid of the world; surprised to find ticks on my skin, and dragonfly nymphs, and spiders living at the heart of a head of lettuce.

