

The Phantom

by Jonathan Williams

Every morning before catching the bus to middle school I would watch Scooby Doo while waiting for a cup of Irish Breakfast to cool. Aside from my father who had already left for work, I would be the first to emerge from my room and step onto the hardwood floor of the kitchen. The sun would not yet have risen to smooth the sharp edges of the immaculate counter tops. Until then the room was carved in stone.

Once, after submerging a tea bag into bubbling water, I pressed the sac against the mug's inside wall with a fork. The bag broke releasing several specks of herb to drift. I lifted the damaged sac by the string and placed it in the sink. There it looked exhausted, slumping over itself. Rather than scoop out the fragments remaining in the cup, I decided to drink it as it was. Freed from its gauzy confines the tea was dizzyingly strong. Even the shenanigans unfolding on the morning's episode of Scooby couldn't compete with the subtle tilting the room had taken on. I was, however, watching the television when Fred unmasked the 'ice cream phantoms' revealing that they were, in fact, Mr. Roberts and his cronies.

The icy staccato of heels descending hardwood stairs reverberated. Approaching the kitchen from the foyer the reverb lessened until heel and floor where flint on flint. No spark was made. She wore black pressed slacks that draped over cream shoes that matched her silk blouse.

"What's this crap?" One long, freshly painted nail pointed into the sink, as her eyes pushed mine down. I got up to find that the teas potency had not altogether worn off. Swerving once, I made it to the counter. The soggy tea bag now had the appearance of a drowned and saturated beast, it's innards oozing into the drain. I tossed the bag into the trash can beneath the sink and flushed the residue into the drain.

As I did so she clicked across the room. I heard the door leading to the garage pull open. I turned to find her, clutching the door knob, as though about to say something. From the TV's only tweeter Mr. Roberts admitted, "and I would've made it to if it weren't for those meddling kids". She shut the door behind her.

I returned to my chair to wait for the warmth of the sun.

