

# The Creature, to an Empty Chair

*by* Lori Lou Freshwater

[The stage is bare, other than one empty chair. The Creature points toward the audience]

They all call me Frankenstein.

[H turns to face the chair]

But that is not my name, it is yours father.

I am just a creature, without a name, without anything. You gave me life but kept from me the tools to live. I am alone, surrounded by people who are unable to look at me without convulsing in disgust or running in terror. I have never known love. Never. How could you not know, father, what is needed by the human heart? The heart you placed into my chest with your very own hands? The heart that bulges and splits as I stand outside of strangers' houses, peering in, straining and grasping and rasping as I ache and shake and wish for death to relieve me.

Of course you know, because from the moment of your first breath you have been loved and you have known what it is like to be connected to another human being, connected from a string attached to that place buried deep within the chest.

Whether it is winter, or spring, or fall. Whether the sky is holding rain in its sullen belly or emptying it out one stinging drop at a time. Whether I walk near the slow sink of a glacier or around some family's cottage full of amber and sweet smells, laughter and tears... I walk without, without house, parent, friend, or spouse.

Know me father.

Because it will glue me. Because then, I can go and live. I won't ask to know you. Don't fear, I will leave you alone. Just give me this one thing and then I will find a home, a place to belong. A little square room with bare walls and stuffy air that will save me from this outdoor tomb.

[He moves toward the chair]

You will not look at me, father.

[He raises his voice]

Look at me.

I don't care if you scream.

Scream, coward, scream.

This is not a monster you see. It is pain taking a form, Plato's dream, born from your hands father that rejected me, giving me the color of abandonment, eyes dulled by isolation, a body deceased without life-giving touch.

I walk, ache, walk, ache, as my pulse thumps in the silence.

My feet become the wet, cold, decomposing leaves underneath.

Acid and pressure build inside as I yearn for a family.

You, you have such complaints about how you've been neglected or mistreated by your parents. Not enough time spent playing childhood games with you. Not enough warmth and support for you. You moan and groan about siblings and cousins who disappoint you, who fail in their own lives, who forget to write you with empty greetings. But imagine, father, for one moment imagine being me. No family. Not one other to claim, not one other who shares your name.

I am a boat untethered, floating without company in the dark and angry sea.

So yes, I ask you for a bride. But a bride will not bring me identity. She may — oh, god please — love me and she may place her sweet, sweet, hand on my cheek filling me... finally. But without you, I will still not be able to fight the voices from within that mimic and mock those I have heard so often, the voices that tell me how repulsive I am and evil and wrong and how I should not have ever been born. Without you father, these voices will only grow louder and shriller and I will have no weapon against them. It will be my curse and this magnificent brain you have given me will begin to corrode itself and turn on me and the only choice I will have will be to turn on others and commit acts of violence so hideous... just to release some of the pressure!

A bride will not bring identity.

Know me father.

You are my mirror, reflect me.

I will feel repulsive, alone, always father, always until my creator sees me,  
knows me.

The Creature, to his Father

"Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me."

~Mary Shelley

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sink of a glacier or around  
their family cottage full of amber,  
I walk without, without  
house, parent, friend, spouse.  
You will not look at me, father.  
Look at me.  
I don't care if you scream,  
coward, scream.  
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