

The Window (Part II)

by Lyle Rosdahl

When we saw the window, we were impressed. It was so clean and transparent that it reminded us of a new pair of glasses, everything so crisp and clear through it. It looked on to nothing. Actually it looked on to the refridgerators and a few stoves, though most of the stoves were on the outside of the window from where we stood. They weren't nearly as attractive as the refrigerators. The edges of the window were straight and hard. We moved up and more appliances filled in the window. The stoves looked better then, we decided. We thumped the glass with the minor knuckles on our right index fingers, first him and then me. It sounded like a watermelon, we agreed. We left tiny smudge marks in the middle of the glass and a small woman in an apron came over and cleared her throat and said, Please don't do that. She wiped the glass down with her apron, stepping back twice to check it. She watched us watch the window for a minute (we were sidetracked at that point, unable to concentrate on the window, instead having her in the corner of our eyes) and then, walking backwards, disappeared down on of the isles, I think it was the lighting isle. It was definitely very bright.

We turned back to the window and there was a man sitting cross-legged on the other side reading a letter. It said, "Please know that it was all my fault and that I'll never forgive myself. I can't go on, but you must go on for my sake." The glass was that clear. He crumpled up the paper and began to cry. We looked around to make sure the woman wasn't lurking and thumped on the glass again. Ripe watermelon. It startled the man, who's red eyes peered up through the glass, the veins bristling like an angry cartoon character's. It was that clear.

The woman in the apron appeared again and rubbed the man's shoulders -- this was getting good. She then pulled up with both of her hands to tell him that he must get up. They stumbled off into the plumbing isle. Pipes and joints and whatnot. She glared at us over her shoulder.

When we turned back to the window a little girl was having a tea party. A decapitated Barbie kept a legless Ken company while the teddy bear sat alone, sightless, the eye buttons having been resewn as nipples, and a plastic crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, I suggested liking the way the cartoonish sound in my mouth) perched on his tail unsteadily in the place of honor across from the hostess. She poured a brackish substance into the tiny teacups and poured Barbie's cup down her neckhole for her. Then she drank her cup solemnly, a religious ritual or suicide. The little girl sputtered, grasped her hands to her throat in mock exaggeration, her legs stiffened, kicking over the little plastic table and all of its inhabitants and convulsed on the floor for just a minute until the woman with the apron came back and prodded the girl with her shoe. Dearie, she said to the little girl, though she glowered at us through the window as if it were *<i>our</i>* fault. The little girl didn't move, her arms stretch out alongside her body. The woman with the apron bent over, tsking and shaking her head, and, with surprising strength, picked the girl fireman style. She nudged the table out of the window's border and slid sideways down the isle with all the hoses.

This window was wonderful and we decided we had to have it. We knew exactly where we could put it. Right in front of the living room window. It will clarify the room, focus the light, strengthen the imagery. We will pull up chairs and look through the window out the window into the front yard and beyond. We will perform plays behind the window for each other -- the annals of history and literature playing themselves out in beautiful high definition. We will move the television set behind the window when there's nothing else to do (though we know that will be infrequent) and watch shows like *Looney Tunes* and *The Shield*. We'll laugh. We'll cry. Our eyes will become stronger. Our children will inherit the window and they'll replace one of the old windows with it. It'll be harder to clean and the glass will begin to flow down, creating funhouse-like mockeries of itself. The world outside will bend and bubble. We will become bulbous. We'll die. Our children will die and someone will throw a baseball through the window.

We interlace our fingers and see that the woman with the apron is peering at us from the corner of the lumber isle. We wave her over. She's reluctant but comes. We ask her how much the window is and she replies by pointing to a price tag we hadn't seen before. It's much too much, we tell her and, sticking our noses up in the air, we traipse out, the perfect window undisturbed in our minds.

