

Two Things I Did Not Know

by Michael J. Solender

The workmanship displayed on the apparatus was shoddy and certainly nothing to feel proud about. Yet there it was on display for the gathering of notables.

The cuts made in the flooring were jagged and showed burn marks from where the dull blades of the circular saw dragged in their failing. Such inferior work was never exhibited in my shop. Yes, my medium of choice was a much softer material, but still I showed respect for the craft.

The hinges were not even brass. At least they bore the load they were intended to shoulder. Ironically they were stainless steel and my boots, stained and soiled, rested squarely upon them.

My boots were standard issue and had never trod on any surface that was not concrete before today. I liked the way my toes felt inside them as I shuffled up the wooden stairs to the first and only landing. Warm and tingly. They were alive.

I breathed in the air exhaled by the very ones who refused to hold my gaze. Their breath stank inside my lungs and tamped down the very minute amount of remorse I had left. It was replaced with contempt. Their fear warmed my cold sensibility as I steeled myself.

It was in the next few moments I learned two things I did not know.

You can hear your own neck snap, broken like a stale pretzel, when you drop through the trap door.

You don't die immediately as it takes time to asphyxiate. No pain though. With your neck broken, your spinal cord is severed and cannot send the pain impulses to your brain.

Maybe you can tell the others.

