

How We Open Doors

by Philip F. Clark

My mother used to say,

"God doesn't close one door
without opening another,"

but I tell you, Atheist I am, I have heard them slam;
I have searched for keys to broken locks, I have sweated
in the sun and looked all day under certain rocks.

I tell you I have banged on wood, I have
banged on metal; I have knocked and knocked
to be let in; I have run away from dogs
and much too eager men,

when all I sought was some room
that could be entered -- we'll call it welcome --
and welcome seemed out for the whole day.

I have looked in windows, and I tell you this:
those who aren't home are never seen,
though hidden behind curtains, they waited
for me to go away. Yes, there have been
doors that never opened,

and hands bruised from pounding
never heard an echo inside. You speak of
what we let in, and I speak of what
is left out -- and calling at the top of my voice
did no good it seemed. What choice
is there for the stalwart against a closed door?

And so when you opened yours,
I was surprised at the sound of my throat,
half-begging in its yell, and you, silent -- as if I had
only rung the rusted bell -- extending something
close to what I would call entry, if entry
can be called how with faith you kissed me.

