

# 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.

