

Isn't Me

By Jackson Hyland-Lipski

I saw it there, it was lying still, completely still, like part of my hard wooden floor, the floor with dark cracks leading from the front door to the pantry in back, never used. The cracks that had no depths, no bottoms, went down forever, as it seemed. I never knew what lay below the wooden floor of the house I built with my father many years earlier. It was now part of the house, this thing, it that lay there, untouched. Nobody ever came to visit, nobody ever came for me, for the thing on the floor. The silence was one I had not experienced before, there wasn't a noise, a voice, or a...a silence, a heavy cloak of silence fell upon the house, the room I was in. I could hear my breathing, I could hear my swallowing.

I left it there, I left my house, brought nothing with me where I was going, not knowing where I was going. I went down the street, down the center of the street, keeping myself aligned with the dotted white lines continuing as far as I could see. It was very bright, everywhere, and I had not seen the street so bright. The small clear shards of iridescent pebble lodged in the street made the tar glitter as if they were stars nudging there way out beyond their black background, coming closer to me, approaching me and becoming brighter as they approached, blinding me, but changing me and where I was.

The street never ends, it never ends, and it never ends, and it keeps going on and on, until the distance becomes a triangle in front of me, ending with a point where the sun was setting. The uniformity, the similarity of the suburbs where I had lived, the house with two trees in front copied twice on each block, the house with a garage and basketball net once on each block. Every day, this was my life, this was my life without living, without living my life without living.

I stepped on the sewage grate. The texture was unsettling on my bare feet, my bare feet? I had no shoes on to my surprise, I had no shoes, the shoes I wore to the office, the shoes I wore to church and services every week, nothing was shielding my feet from the unsettling texture of the sewage grate, the texture that melted my permeable skin into the creases of the checkered grid that lay an inch higher than the rest of the rusted metal, the metal that made a rosy gridded imprint on the bottom of my fleshy foot, and the rusted

metal that cut my sensitive feet because of the one dark orange rust layer that bubbled above the next lighter layer of rusted sewage grate. The bubble of dark rust imploded with a crunch and sent shards of rust into my foot. The reality touching my feet was startling, I had never been hurt this much before, I had never been aware of a pain or sensation so much.

I limped down the center of the street, oh I had a limp now, walking down the uniformed street, limping down the uniformed main street of my suburb. Nobody was there, no lights were on, no people were out walking, it was a nice day, there should be people walking. The limp made me walk slower, made me begin to realize, begin to admire the smaller differences between the houses with 2 trees in front, the small differences between the houses with garages and a basketball net in front. These differences were not noticeable to me before that thing was on my hardwood floor, but were there now, as if they were all new, at least to me. They were alterations, or variations, or additions to the uniformity, like a wind chime in front of #1327, or a door mat saying “don’t knock, I see you coming!” these changes are what made these houses unique, what gave these houses their personalities, their substance.

I had not noticed these before, these subtle changes between each house, it gave me shivers, gave me the creeps, scared me and confused me as to why I had to do it last night. Why not wait until the morning, why not wait until I saw these houses in the sunlight and how they were in fact unique and personal. I had to leave that thing on my floor the night before, that thing, still lying on my floor. I guess that is the only thing that made my house different. It had me in it, my self, my whole, in theory. Why I did it, I was not sure, until I was free of it, free of my body. It was not part of me, I did not need it, I do not want it, it was unnecessary, I am free but alone now, not part of the uniqueness of the world, and not able to interact with it. I do admire it, though. It is very beautiful, very special. However it is not part of me.

It's as if it isn't me
This thing lying on the floor,
This useless item, this symbolic wealth, symbol of status,
This carrier, a carrier for ideas, for revolutions, for innovations, and yet just a carrier.
It's as if it isn't me, anymore, this body on the floor,
This transporter to the office, this object suppressing me from transporting further,
Further than the office, further than the false sense of duty, and as far from it as possible.
Impossible if it is me,
This body,
If this body is all of me,
The body lying on the floor,
On my floor where.