

The Man Without A Face
By Jackson Hyland-Lipski

I was looking out the window at the street. The street that lay beneath my front porch, the street lit only by a few circles on the ground made by the streetlights. The circles scattered across the street side looked like portals, I thought. Portals to another world, a brighter world, maybe like the countryside or something, I thought. I always wanted to live in the countryside. A man was standing in the street, the middle of the street, half way inside one of these portals, these streetlight circles ironed flat on the contrasting black tar. He stood there, not moving towards me, not moving away, just standing. The bright light hitting his face like he was sitting in the dentist chair, that light, made it seem like he had no face. In fact, he did, he must have, he had to have a face, but I could not see it, even though he was looking up at me. Right at me. The streetlight reflected in his eyes, made them as white as if it made the rest of his face, his shadowed face, disappear. He scared me, I could not keep looking at him in this awkward, silent, mysterious way. I could not keep looking. I had to keep looking at the man, he scared me. He scared me enough to be frightened to leave him alone, to let him stand in front of my house, looking in my house, looking at me. I had to stay at my window, maybe I should close the curtains, peak out through a slit, and see if he still stays.

Tomorrows gonna be a scorcher London! No clouds, no wind, get ready because it doesn't seem like its gonna last long, Friday is rain rain rain!

The radio was sitting on the carved dresser, white lace on top that was beginning to turn yellow from the coffee stains covering it. It said it was going to be nice tomorrow. I hated when they said it was going to be nice tomorrow. I didn't want to imagine tomorrow, when it was raining today, the ground reflecting the circle portals from the streetlights. I couldn't visualize the street any different, it had been wet so long, stayed the same so long.

I saw Clarissa...Clarissa I think it was, at her window, she too was staring at me from across the street, from her window, the second story, just like mine. She moved in not too long back, a few years I think it's been. Before her, my friends lived there, my best of friends, they were all I had after Gerald left, all I had before I had nothing at all. Dalloway! That's it, Clarissa Dalloway, I could see her looking at me, judging me by the way I am, the only thing she knows about me, that I am old, I am decrepit. She does not

know my past, she does not know me, she makes my future, she thinks I will die soon, she thinks I am unnecessary, lazy, fixed.

“And she watched out of the window the old lady opposite climbing upstairs. Let her climb upstairs if she wanted to; let her stop; then let her, as Clarissa had often seen her, gain her bedroom, part her curtains, and disappear again into the background. Somehow one respected that- that old woman looking out of the window, quite unconscious that she was being watched. There was something solemn in it- but love and religion would destroy that, whatever it was, the privacy of the soul.”

I was getting ready for bed, the bed that had been too big for me for 38 years, so big that many nights I had to sleep on the couch, the red couch that sat in the corner, looking out the window. I put my flower-patterned nightgown on, as if I was already slipping into my dreams, my dreams of the country, of getting away from the suburbs. I hated the uniformed streets, the similarity of the days, the same. I hated the sameness of my life, of my days and their routine. I turned off my eternally playing weather station, always the same verdict, except for tomorrow. Tomorrow was going to be very pleasant, but I will wait until I see it tomorrow to think about it, I want to now realize the beauty of today, what is good about today. What *is* good about today? Nothing? I don't know whether it was me thinking about tomorrow that made me too optimistic, made me hate the present, or whether there was nothing good in my life until I had the next day, until I thought of what beautiful occurrences lay ahead in my life. I went downstairs, where I spent the least amount of my time. I was always up in my room, or in Gerald's old study, how he used to love to read his old books. I missed him, I missed him so much, I knew I would see him soon though. I went downstairs, down to the closet at the front steps, the closet I never opened, the closet I had no use for anymore. I opened the small black wooden box that lay above Gerald's messily hung jackets, the jackets he used to wear when he went out late at night, not telling me where he was going, not telling me when he'd get back. I opened it, I went back upstairs, into bed. I lay there, I lay there for many hours, looking up at the white paint cracking in vein-like patterns on my ceiling, that appeared only because of the streetlight, only because of the one flickering was I able to see the flaws of my ceiling, of my house. I had not noticed these flaws, these vein-like cracks before. I lay up straight still, not able to sleep, not going to sleep, I was going to

see Gerald in the morning, I knew it, but I was scared, I was scared I might not see him. I had to find him, and had to see him once again after his absence of 38 years. I had to. I put it to my head, it was cold and hard on my withering scalp, and it began to give me a headache, for I held it there for a few minutes. A cut was beginning to form from me holding it there, and shaking, making it scrape and scratch against the side of my head. I will see you soon Gerald, very soon indeed. I love you, and I cannot stand this repetitive world, this world in the suburbs, where the only thing I have to look forward to is the next day, not today, but the future, the future which never comes, is always ahead of me. I got up, I couldn't lie there any longer, I had to get up. I went in to the hallway, down the stairs, back to the closet, got his jacket and hat, put them on. I needed to be close to Gerald, I never was, not even when he was here. I went back upstairs, and into Gerald's old study. I sat at his old desk, saw his old books, his old drawings, his old models, his old glasses and pens, his old papers that lay in 3 piles in front of me. I sat down, with Gerald's black hat and jacket on, and I placed my hand on the small metal way for me to see my husband. The man with no face was standing at my side, staring down at me, not judgmentally, not like the Dalloway woman across the street. He had no sense of dislike for me, yet no sympathy, he stood there, anxiously, his bright eyes reflecting in the metal shoved against my head. I pulled the trigger.

Clarissa felt very tired from her party the night before, she had let them all into her house, into her ideas and soul, and they all loved it, they all loved her lie of a party, her lie of a personality. Clarissa's room was flashing red and blue, red and blue, she did not understand. She looked out the window and saw two police cars and an ambulance in front of the old lady across the street's front porch. It was a beautiful day, no clouds, no rain, very hot, unlike the days before, which Clarissa found to be very dreary. Today was going to be a good day.