

“HOME”

by Sarah diGiovanna

You walk around the house with no intention. You don't notice the *things* around you, because they are already yours. The dark wood shines with a mocking glint, the knick-knacks atop it placed in a spot just right. The small indent in the bannister matches up with the scar on your left knee. If no one is home, is it still home?

The dog bowl is half-full, or half-empty, its counterpart's water absent. You can't hear the pitter-patter of nails across hardwood. The dog's toys have long been put away. You still check for tennis balls and squeaky toys in your path to the television, to the bathroom, to your room.

Can you call it your room? You have things in it, but only the least important of them. You can single out an old pair of outdated Britney Spears bugged-eyed sunglasses, a teal CD case that had been a gift from your aunt, and the Starbucks bowl set that your mother broke a piece of last month.

If you screamed out loud no one would hear you. The thought strikes you that if you were to die, no one would know for many days. They wouldn't come looking for you.

Every once and awhile you'll go and check the locks on the doors. The feeling of unease about being home alone never quite settles with you. You frequently find yourself wondering if someone is watching you. Maybe you don't want to think about the truth. That you are terribly, terribly alone.

You wonder in the scope of things if everything around you really matters. If you know something by heart, do you need to write it down?

The things that make you you are always there, but what about the things that *used* to define you? Where do they go when you move on and out?

The shutters haven't been opened, because that's not your job. When you're alone, the house doesn't run like usual. The morning light doesn't ever reach the house if there is no one there to catch it. You never wake up early enough to catch it.

Socked feet slide across smoothed surface and you wonder how it'd feel if you could just keep going, going, gone.

Each click of the channel creaks up a notch of the hysteria in your throat.

Every dense silence of unopened doors reminds you that the walls that surround you are not why you think of this place when you close your eyes.

If no one is home, is it still a home?

You let the panic in; no one is hear to see it.

If no one is home, do you have a home?