

My Casket is Your Castle

-Sean Monett



Marybell kept her house cleaner than ours. I was marrying her son, and she had a right to be concerned, I felt. I had a pile of dirty dishes in the sink of my mind. We walked into her house and I felt the disinfectant mist wash over me.

“Mom, this is my boyfriend- uh- fiancée,” My fiancée was flubbering. Hugs all around. I stared at the wood panelling on the wall behind Marybell’s gold-embroidered red leather couch. I got an eerie feeling that a smelly contractor had sealed up something nasty in that wall. An inaudible whimper bit through the stormy calm of afternoon tea.

A piece of unwrapped hard candy crawled past us on the carpet near my armchair. It had a curly brown hair stuck to it. Marybell’s hair was white. She took no notice of the mobile strawberry sugar puck. She and her son were verbally time-travelling together, leaving me alone to study the ceiling. The frames on the walls were empty. Vacant lots of drywall, fenced off by ornate golden scrolls. I tuned back in to the conversation.

“Well you know, depression is not a disease, it’s a choice!” Marybell was frowning at us as she said this. Later, she showed us her collection of pickled newspapers in jars. Her garage was a library of dust-less metal shelving. Her neighbor, Janet, dropped by wearing two mismatched orthotic shoes and a dead leaf stuck to her t-shirt. She laughed at Marybell.

“They’ll never keep!” Janet jested. I thought she was talking about our relationship. Marybell told us that Janet keeps a lobster in an aquarium full of caramel. A stray dog loped down the sidewalk, carrying a dead bird. I peered into one of the murky grey jars, dated Aug 24th, no year. The face of a bloated Bill Clinton peeked out at me. He was twirling an ostentatious mustache.

