

Darkness. I let the shadows consume me. A creature enveloped in black looms over me, his presence chilling every bone in my body. His piercing red eyes bore deep into my skin. I reach for the lamp on my bedside table only to realize that I am unable to move, my entire being stricken with fear. He gets closer. Even with my eyes closed I am certain he is coming towards me. He lunges forward...

I spring up from my bed, knocking my lamp off my table and wincing as its lightbulb shatters on my creaky wooden floors, spraying glass shards throughout my room. I start hyperventilating. I call into the darkness for someone, anyone, to come save me. Someone to rush in and tell me that everything is okay. But no one is home. Yes! No one is home. *No being is in this house!* After attempting to steady my uncontrollably shaking hand, I grab my phone and turn its flashlight on. I muster up all the courage I have to traipse across my room. The farther I walk the farther my door gets. I break into a run, desperate for a way out of this nightmare, this living hell. A glass shard enters my bare foot and I fall to the floor. Everything in my brain is telling me to run but my aching limbs feel like chains are pulling them back to my bed. I can't go back. I *won't* go back. I stumble onto my feet and continue sprinting down this never-ending expanse. I slip on the blood quickly gushing from my foot and hit my head on a hard surface. *The door! I've made it!* I've been chasing this door for what seems like ages but I never stopped to think about what I would do if I eventually reached it. Now I'm afraid of what may be lurking on the other side.

*My legs. The chains. I can't let them take me back.* I throw open the door and take a moment to examine the rest of my house. It looks exactly as it had been earlier. I so want to breathe a sigh of relief but I can't think that this is over. Not yet. I trail every hall and examine every room until my mind will let me believe that my house is indeed empty. The chains on my feet seem to loosen. My heart slows...

The dark figure suddenly rematerializes. His shadowy hand reaches deep into my chest suffusing my heart with his gelid energy. Exhaustion takes over; the world becomes a blur. I submit to the shadows.

~Thank you so much for reading!