Henry Dixon

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American Literature

Mr. Baker

Narrative

The curated hallways were uncharacteristically void of any life; the floor was without any nurses wheeling unconscious patients, without mentally vacant businessmen bumping carelessly through the double doors, without doctors frantically demanding epinephrine, or more morphine. The lifeless, expressionless hallways were absent of any motion, save my pacing and the occasional fluctuation of electric current. The anxious shuffle carried out by my feet had long since progressed into a haphazard balloter down the endless maze of hospital halls. My capricious pace slowed and wandered indirectly between the two dimly lit walls. Deliberately and haptically, I placed my feet on the colored tiles, while lazily but consistently avoiding the lines on the linoleum floor. The smell of rubbing alcohol and the impersonal nature of the hallways normally should have kept my mind on edge, but the knowledge of the current state of my life provided sufficient apprehension for the time being.

Even the fundamental layout of this room cried of painstaking preparation and overuse of harsh right angles. It was as if the contractor or architect tasked to create the hospital had forgotten his protractor and was rendered unable to include any curvature into the environment. Instead, this mystery constructor was doubtless forced to make due with straight lines intersecting at exclusively ninety-degree angles. Unnecessarily bright light leaked through the solitary glass window placed directly across the hallway from a bench, the only object contained in the hallway other than my coat, which lay draped across the length of it. The light fell on the coat directly but reverberated throughout the hallway with a magnitude that seemed unnatural, despite it being the only natural presence in the entire vicinity. The sunlight seemed unable to mix with the fluorescent light that filled the space with its colorless illumination of every idiosyncratic detail, which seemed few and far between.

Although there were probably merely twenty feet between the two sets of double-doors that defined the lengthwise boundaries of the hall, there was plenty of room to accommodate my movement. Nonetheless, I shouldered the set of doors as I had resolved to make my way back to the waiting room.

A man (presumably a doctor) entered with another unfamiliar man clutching a clipboard, both with somber expressions masking their faces. The latter figure, not dressed exactly like a doctor, entered the room behind the first. Instead of the typical white and blue doctor attire, the older man – he looked to be around sixty years of age – exhibited a long white lab coat. The man extended his hand and introduced himself as Dr. Wilder Schrödinger, a molecular biologist specializing in gene therapy. Schrödinger, a weasel-looking fellow, peered about the surroundings from behind extraordinarily thick glasses. As his eyes traced the contours of the room, they eventually reached the corners of my figure, prompting the man to examine me as he probably would a mouse. He reeked of coffee, cigarettes, and a scent I couldn’t exactly place, but it reminded me of death.