

fumbled with the lock, trying to get it open and pry off the boards on the outside. The rain seemed excruciating loud, but I could almost taste safety on the other side of the door.

CRASH!

The basement door broke open with a crack much louder than any of the thunder I'd heard so far. Giving up on the door, I immediately ran up the stairs to my left to the second floor. Knowing whatever it was would only be a few moments behind me I wished I had another door to shut to slow it down, if only for a second. As I ran, I could hear the rain on the roof crescendo. I looked around the second floor. This floor may have been a little brighter than the ground floor, but it was in no better condition. It was as if this house full of memories had been evacuated and abandoned for decades.

All the windows were boarded up, and other than a layer of dust the only thing in any of the main rooms was a large dark stain on the floor of what was my bedroom. It was quickly obvious that I would not find a way out here so I bolted, limping slightly from the pain in my foot. If I could get to the veranda in the back of the house, I might be able to shimmy down the side of the building to safety; assuming I didn't slip in the rain. It had a glass door after all so I could use my body to break it open. What was a few more scrapes at this point?

As I ran, I could feel it getting closer. By this point it was on the second floor with me as I hurried to the door. The closer it got, the more horrified I became. The sound of the rain was almost deafening now, but compared to the entity inside with me, it felt like my salvation. Luckily when I grabbed the veranda door handle, it flew open and I tumbled outside onto the balcony.

Outside was pouring rain. The dops fell hard and stung. This constant firing of miniature

bullets was painful, but I barely noticed. I needed to find a way out of the house. Out of the neighborhood. Out of the entire town. I was looking around for a drain pipe or a ledge to shimmy across when I noticed it: the view. The trees normally extend through to the hill line below and to the end of my sightline.

They were gone.

The trees weren't cut down, or replaced by new building, they were just gone. At the end of my backyard the world seemed to just vanish. I couldn't tell if it was simply too dark to see that far or if my house had been teleported to some other dimension that was pitch black and full of nothing but swirling storm clouds, thunder, and rain. I suppose in the end it didn't really matter.

As I was looking for a way to run away, I could feel it: the same feeling I had in the basement. This terror resonated with me to my core. This was something that felt baked into my very being, something at a baser level than any human logic. Pure, unfiltered fear. I knew that whatever the thing was it was now right behind me on the other side of this last door. I stopped and looked up at the rain. At this moment the rain suddenly let up. I could see the stars through the eye of the storm and as the sound of the raindrops stopped, only to be replaced by the crashing of the veranda door being knocked open.