

Dark

A poem

by Lori R. Lopez

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A black hole is etched in my soul
Space has no end, no beginning
It bounces to the knife-edge of Nevermore
And beyond, perhaps too far
Past the scary old tree
At the end of the road
That you reach now and then; a dead end
I've been there. Have you?
Yet I always seem to keep going
Over the barbed-wire fence, into tall grass
A stark field, the kind that's just there
For no apparent reason
It's always the same, like a dream
Tromping in black and white
Approaching a house
I wish I could stop
I am drawn inexorably to disaster
Like insects flock to a window or burning bulb
Please stop. Why won't you listen?
I climb the steps, cross the porch, turn the handle
Forgetting to knock, as if I already know
The answer
Crossing the threshold with bated breath
Asking for trouble, fearing the worst
We never fear the best
And the house is so dark
Inside and out
It chills my veins and spine
Forgive me, I can't look
But must and shuffle toward the parlor
The man in his chair, eyes staring
At something that isn't there
Doesn't notice me
Or hear the clock tick on a mantel
Crimson staining his white shirt
From numerous cuts
Splatters the cortex of my brain

I doubt it will wash out
His eyes haunt me as I retreat
Seeing them in my skull
I fumble down a hall
The dinner table is set
A lady and two children sit
Like a museum exhibit
Faces on their plates
I don't stay for dessert
Fleeing upstairs as if to hide
Under the bed of an elderly matron
Stretched primly on the chenille spread
Fully dressed in sensible shoes and hat
Eyes closed, her expression passive
No sign of blood but I'm too late
A door crashes in below me
And I stand frozen next to a corpse
As boots echo through the house
He's coming and I can't move
I can't wake up
It isn't a dream
It's dark
I should have kept it to myself
These memories
I crouched in the closet
Listening while he entered the room
And found me
I sneezed from the dust
And nervousness
Slapping palms to my mouth
Tardily, after the fact
With a growl he yanked the door
I was never good at Hide-And-Seek
He always won . . .
We are eternal
That's the first thing you realize
On the other side.

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Lori and her talented sons have a creative company at fairyflyentertainment.com.
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