The Door Itself (Poet Lore)
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THE DOOR ITSELF

I don’t want to ignore the door, the size and weight of the door, the rectangular seam of door and the sound of the door like dogs barking, potatoes frying or a straining violin. I don’t want to ignore the closed door, not knowing if it opens in or out—pushing instead of pulling—I don’t want to ignore what the door is made of—teak or leaf, bed sheet or cloudbank—I don’t want to ignore the door that is unsanded or the smooth one that’s a window or the symbolic door you have to pretend to feel at all. I don’t want to ignore the door that smells of lilacs or almond extract or drowning worms. I don’t want to ignore the door not knowing how easily it bruises, how hard to knock and if there is a special spot, how fast or slow and if I get no answer how long should I pause between the next series of knocks and if it’s okay to really pound in case someone is in the attic, not knowing if the door bleeds if I were to cut into it with an instrument of torture or reckless thoughtlessness. Speaking of thought, not knowing what the door thinks—one can be dumb as a door knob but the door itself, seeing how it’s between two worlds, I imagine has a lot to say about both, not knowing how a door draws conclusions but looking to consult it more often, not knowing if a door with a mind of its own will close by itself or it if takes one or more persons, not knowing how long the door has been open or how long it will take to close it or how long it will stay closed and how many stations of ajar there are, not knowing when it opens if it swings too hard and hits the wall leaving a mark, not knowing if there is even a wall to leave a mark on or if it swings open with nothing to stop it from making a complete circle and if it goes around again and again and if it is still going around, looking to the door for signs someone was trying to get in, looking to the door to open into a mountain, not knowing if a new door is properly scaled to close the whole way, not knowing this before making a dramatic exit in high heels and discovering it won’t slam. I don’t think we should ignore the door not knowing the color of the door and if there is another color underneath, not knowing if the door is soundproof or if we can assume silence means no one is on the other side, not knowing if the door has a name on it or a number, not knowing if that is the door’s name or if it’s someone else’s, someone who doesn’t look or act like a door but only does things behind it and though most doors are blind not knowing which doors
can see, not knowing if there is a face on the other side
trying to see for it through the tiniest eye, not knowing
if there is a mirror on the other side and if someone is looking
not at the door but at themselves, using the door that way,
not knowing how much space is under the door, what width
of illumination in an otherwise dark hall is lying like a discarded
light saber, not knowing if you can slip a piece of paper under it—
a pamphlet? a small book?—not knowing if the door is permeable
and a body can project itself through, not knowing if the door
was ever removed from its hinges and used as a table.
I don’t want to ignore the kicked in door either; I don’t care how
or why it happened, that it’s broken through stops me in my tracks
as do ones covered with moss or graffiti or charred into blackboards
you can write on or when a couple are lying on the ground
on top of each and it’s been snowing for twenty minutes already,
not knowing the future of such doors, if they will ever “work again,”
not knowing if two people separated from each other
by only a door and sitting on either side of it unable to touch
are touching the door in the “same” place and know it,
not knowing if the door is locked on purpose or if
it’s unlocked because someone forget to lock it, not knowing
the rooms on either side, trying to move between them as facilitated
or thwarted by the door, not being able to find the door, not knowing
if there even is one, confused by its transparency, by its concreteness,
confused by surfaces that can suddenly open, mindful of the minefield
of trapdoors that is any expanse of floor, confused by the door that is
more of a gate, that is more of a hatch, more of an archway, vowing
to learn all the tricks to opening a door under water, vowing to prop
more doors open with chairs or wads of newspaper, intrigued
most of all by the door that is not a door as proven by the divider placed
over it that can fold into thirds upon which a woman changing clothes
drapes her silk robe. I don’t want to assume that’s not a door knowing
for a time it was, suspecting it could go back to being one again.