

## *Limen*

by Anne Myles

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The red door is stop. The red door is through. The red door is enamelled, hot and almost tacky in its southern exposure. Sometimes the red door shines and drips with rain. Do you see what I'm getting at, what I'm not saying? Out and in is before and after. I waited so long to know what was behind it. I waited in the car, I circled the block while I fantasized about running up the walkway, trying the handle. I was afraid to look if anyone was home. I imagined if I knocked there would be no sound.

The door is a deep and lickable red, like the hard candy coating they put over apples. In the darkness my tongue touches my own lips. The door is red as burlesque lipstick. As scarlet silk. The door is a siren.

In my drawer I keep antique postcards of the door. I look for pictures of it in magazines in the far back shelves of secondhand shops. We slide our eyes past one another, those of us who are hunting for the door. We trade our images in obscure corners of the internet. If someone startles us our faces flush.

The red door is the door of a house, I should have noted that already. It has a peephole and brass numbers. Children play on an antique rug on the other side. It looks like picture books but not everyone gets to live in a house like that. You can ask yourself if you would want to. Maybe you want at least to step inside to see what's in there, to feel with your own hand the smooth and solid opening. You think of the phrase as safe as houses.

Some days all I can think about is entering the door but then strangely when I stand in front of it I don't want to anymore. I admire things that are impregnable. It makes me feel so peculiar.

A door is a passageway. How did Persephone get taken to the underworld, anyway? I see a red door laid in the ground, pried violently open. So much is down there, let me tell you. The counter-heart. The counter-house. The charnel house. The first nothing the world's roots grow from.

I think of the valves of my heart opening and shutting, how they have been doing this forever. We know only because we've read it that this slick and meaty organ is not the seat of love, else we'd never imagine otherwise. I press my hand over my heart to forgive myself for my failure.