

**A**re you like me? Do you, when you're having a hard time sleeping, close your eyes and try to remember the house you used to live in, going room by room until you fall asleep? And you *will* fall asleep. As long as you manage not to remember that in some of the rooms you're picturing you were also sleepless and thinking of other houses and other rooms.

For some reason, the first room I picture in my house in Cincinnati—where I lived from 2001 to 2010—is the kitchen. And if I'm still awake after picturing the kitchen—I never fall asleep after picturing just the kitchen—I then picture the kitchen window, and out of that window, I picture the garage.

One spring day I was looking out the kitchen window in my house in Cincinnati when I saw a man—young, thin, Black, civilian—sprint down my driveway and then disappear behind my garage. Seconds later I saw another man—middle-aged, fat, white, cop—also sprint down my driveway and then disappear behind my garage.

The far side of my garage, where both men had disappeared, was a mess of honeysuckle. It was the kind of place I would have loved as child. As a child, I would have found or made a hiding place underneath the bushes and I would have then stayed there for hours—not doing anything-in-particular, just lying there, or sitting, or crouching, with my eyes closed.

When we say someone is hiding, we usually mean that someone has found a place to put their body. But I think I was looking for a place to put my mind.

Finally, after several minutes the cop reappeared, mopping his red face with his white shirt-

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sleeve. I was standing on my back stoop by this point, and the cop noticed me and asked if I'd been standing there the entire time. It was too complicated to say, "Well, earlier I was watching from my kitchen window, but by the time you'd reappeared from behind my garage, I'd stopped watching from my kitchen window and started watching from my back stoop." And so, I said, "Yeah." And then I asked, "Where'd he go?"

"Exactly," the cop said, as though he'd found a new suspect to make up for the one he'd lost. "That's what *I'd* like to know."

And if I'm still awake after I picture the kitchen, I picture the front entryway. The door in the front entryway was made of leaded glass. On either side of the door were two door-sized panels of the same leaded glass.

I have owned three houses. I've lived in several others. In none of them was there anything as beautiful as that glass. I would say that it was the most beautiful thing I ever owned, but it felt much more like it belonged to the house than it did to me.

One day, when my son was three—around the same time as I watched the white cop chase the Black man down my driveway and behind my garage—I walked from the kitchen toward the entryway, and I saw that he was sitting in front of the door. When it was sunny—and it was sunny this day—light poured through the glass and bounced crazily around the room. My son was sitting in what appeared to be the very center of the light. As though he was its source. My beautiful baby boy.

His face was covered with blood. His hands were covered with blood.

I didn't say anything. My son didn't say anything. I think he was waiting for my reaction, and that would tell him what his reaction should be.

I have no idea what my reaction was. I wanted to be calm, comforting. But my son looked at me, and then he started to cry.

The house came with an alarm system. The previous owners had had it disconnected and that was fine with me. I'd never had an alarm system before, and I didn't want one now.

Not long after I moved in, though, a representative from the security company came to the house to try to convince me that I did want an alarm system. He was a neatly dressed middle-aged Black man holding a leather-bound folder. We spoke in the kitchen, which is where the alarm-system panel was.

"You have *nice things*," he told me, ominously.