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Welcome Home

Jolie Vega
College of DuPage

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A piece of hair. Just one. I found it near a crack in the wall. I wouldn't have been alarmed if it was the same color as mine. The next day it was more hair, slipping out as if gasping for air. I think the crack was bigger than it was before, I'm not sure.

Swarming out of the crack, my hair gripped the wall in a desperate attempt to break it. Clumps formed like claws, desperately scratching at the chipping paint, cracking, dragging, and scraping away so the distance between us closes. I hope you see it.

I patched the crack in the wall. Hairs were swarming out of it like worms, slithering and wiggling as they fell towards the ground when I approached. Maybe I was imagining it, but I swear the hair clung to me as I cleaned up. I'm still finding pieces on clothes I wasn't wearing that day.

I know every nook and cranny inside the walls of this house, all the places where I can take hold of your rooms like an infection. All the places where I can leave bits of myself. All the places where I can see you.

Fingernails. In my bed, beside my pillow, in the kitchen. There are so many different sizes and shapes, that's how I know they aren't mine. That's how I know they must have come from multiple hands.

You patched up another one of the cracks today. It doesn't matter, I can make more. Every day I grow stronger. Soon I'll be strong enough to meet you. I should think of a gift to give you until then.

I should have known there was a reason this house was so cheap. I was practically given it for free. My closet is completely swamped in hair now, I've discovered multiple colors and lengths. Just how many people did these come from? I've been keeping a record; I keep it in a journal near my bed, the one next to the trash can I swipe discarded fingernails into, and the small pile of clothes that haven't been infected by the hair yet. 12 types. I've found 12 types of hair.

I decided on a gift.

Gushing out of each gap in the tiles, pouring into my lap as I lay in the bathtub below, gallons and gallons of pus. At first, I had tried to contain it by pressing my hands against each sputtering hole, but there were too many, and my body was soon coated in a thick layer of the secretion. Eventually, the pus stopped, yet when I tried to drain the tub I found it was thoroughly clogged by a growth of sturdy hair. I would try to scoop up the pus in buckets and empty it outside, but all the doors and windows have been shut tight for days now, covered by some red and blue pulsating vines that I can't bring myself to take a closer look at.

I've nearly grown enough, soon I'll be ready. It's been so long since anyone joined me. I can't wait. My body has expanded beyond the inside of these walls, taken root inside your fridge, in your closet, your cabinets, your doors, windows, and floor. I am a mold pervading your mind.

Each step I take squishes the floor, the flesh growing from within the wood, collapsing under the weight of my foot before bouncing back up, spreading further with renewed vigor and a sloppy, wet sound. At this point, the windows are so heavily covered that I can barely see with such little light, my other senses bombarded by the sound of a pumping heart and the rush of blood. My hands cling to the scaly, hairy walls for some sort of guidance. The house creaks slowly, in and out as if breathing; the walls shuddering and hair blowing along with the rhythm. I steady myself enough to make it to the kitchen. Holding a knife in my hand, knuckles white yet hands shaking, I prepare myself.

Come here. Come here so I can get a good look at you. Don't be scared. We'll meet soon.

The flesh was much thicker than I imagined, and although I put my whole body into each stab, it seemed to barely make a cut in the wall. The house shook and pumped around me, seeming to twitch with each slice of my knife. Finally, through the dim light filtered around me, I could make out a small gas sputtering blood weakly that pitter-pattered against what was left of the wooden floor, the flesh convulsing around each splatter as if to suck it up. I desperately thrust in my knife, pushing down the blade as deeply as I could, each motion gradually opening the wound. At last, a chunk splashed onto the bloody floor, and from there the walls continued to crumble, the house violently heaving, whimpering and moaning in pain.

My breath hitched in my throat, knife clattering to the ground, hands trembling in rhythm to the house. Eyes. Teeth. Arms. Hair. Veins. Legs. Fingers. Nails. Hearts. Faces. All spread out within the walls in some sort of organ system, enough pieces coming together to somewhat form multiple individuals in certain spots. Swaying arms, rolling eyes, screaming mouths, flailing hair, pumping organs; my senses were so jarred that I didn't even notice the hair snaking around my ankle, bringing me closer.

Welcome home.