

2013

Kablooey is the Sound You'll Hear

Debra Marquart

Iowa State University, marquart@iastate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/engl_pubs



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

The complete bibliographic information for this item can be found at http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/engl_pubs/177. For information on how to cite this item, please visit <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/howtocite.html>.

This Creative Writing is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Publications by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

Kablooey is the Sound You'll Hear

Abstract

then plaster falling and the billow of gypsum after your sister blows a hole in the ceiling of your brother's bedroom with the shotgun he left loaded and resting on his dresser...

Disciplines

Nonfiction

Comments

Originally published as "Kablooey is the Sound You'll Hear." *The Normal School* 6.2 (2013): 19. Posted with permission.

described in the copy as “Cute” and “Own your own home!” had begun to seem more desirable than our house, because they were somewhere else, far from Scenic Heights, far from the beer parties and the annoying college students who weren’t Sam and reminded me of that fact every time I saw them.

And then, on our way to Target, driving out of the Heights, we saw the sign, the huge sign beside our forest—“Coming Soon from WellSprings Corporation! Luxurious Swiss Chalets!” The poles holding up the sign were as big as telephone poles, almost. I noticed this because I thought, right away, of ramming the sign.

“Bastards!” Della said. She flapped frantically at her door till she slapped the button to roll down her window. “Bastards!” she yelled at the sign. She cried all the way to Target.

I really should’ve shelved my plan to penetrate the compound, but for some reason, the sign, and Della’s reaction to it, made me feel even more determined. The Bejoorganhoosens could not keep me out if I wanted to go in!

It was warmer and sunnier that day, in the mid sixties. Unfortunately for them, the Bejoorganhoosens were sitting in their outdoor living room when Della and I squeezed through their hedge.

“Greetings, friends,” I said, holding up my hand like an Indian in a Western.

Bertie was knitting on the couch, Ron reading *The New York Times* in a rocking chair. They glanced up at us, startled and puzzled, as if they’d never seen us before. This made my stomach twist even tighter.

“Sorry about our appearance,” Della said.

I said, “Speak for your yourself. I’ve had my shower today.” Neither Ron nor Bertie said anything, so I pointed at the chair with the stuffing coming out. “May I?”

“Of course,” Bertie said, lowering into her lap the pink thing she was knitting. “You too, Della. Have a seat. Welcome to Shangri-La!” She stretched her face into a grin.

Ron, who’d folded up his newspaper, was still staring at me. And, considering what my plan was, he had a right to be on guard.

Della and I both sat down in overstuffed chairs. The cushions of my swivel chair were damp. How could they stand sitting on soggy cushions day after day? They both looked dapper, as always. The collar of Ron’s

KABLOOEY IS THE SOUND YOU’LL HEAR

Debra Marquart

then plaster falling and the billow of gypsum after your sister blows a hole in the ceiling of your brother’s bedroom with the shotgun he left loaded and resting on his dresser.

It’s Saturday, and the men are in the fields. You and your sister are cleaning house with your mother. Maybe your sister hates cleaning that much, or maybe she’s just that

thorough, but somehow she has lifted the gun to dust it or dust under it (you are busy mopping the stairs) and from the top of the landing where you stand, you turn toward the sound

to see your sister cradling the smoking gun in her surprised arms, like a beauty queen clutching a bouquet of long-stemmed roses after being pronounced the official winner.

Then the smell of burnt gunpowder reaches you, dirty orange and sulfurous, like spent fireworks, and through the veil of smoke you see the hole smoldering

in the ceiling, the drywall blown clean through insulation to the naked joists, a halo of perforations around the hole just above her head, that dark constellation

where the buckshot spread. The look on your sister’s face is pure shitfaced shock, you’d like to stop and memorize it for later family stories, but now you must focus

on the face of your mother, frozen there downstairs at the base of the steps where she has rushed from vacuuming or waxing, her frantic eyes searching

your face for some clue about the extent of the catastrophe. But it’s like that heavy quicksand dream where you can’t move or speak, so your mother scrambles up

the stairs on all fours, past you, to the room where your sister has just found her voice, already screaming—*it just went off!* *it just went off!*—as if a shotgun

left to rest on safety would rise and fire itself. All this will be hashed and re-hashed around the dinner table, but what stays with you all these years later,

what you cannot forget, is that moment when your mother waited at the bottom of the steps for a word from you, one word, and all you could offer her was silence.