Ekphrastic Reflection

by

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This piece of writing is one of eight ekphrastic reflections written by Notre Dame Creative Writing MFA students. Ekphrasis has been defined as a literary device in which a painting, sculpture, or other work of visual art is described in detail. Today, many contemporary writers use ekphrasis to translate existing visual artworks into new poems and stories. Does this ekphrastic reflection make you see the artwork in a new way?

(2) Two (NO) EXIT

(NO) EXIT

diverged in a rusty fire escape

But we aren't exiting we are entering

Trying to enter the building

Push/pull

no matter the urgency you must have the wherewithal to take a step back so you can pull the door open

Mother said to me in a dream last Thursday in another life tomorrow

Exit/Enter the impenetrable wall

Rust devours my insides too

Either way, no escape this isn't a fire escape the fire is raging from outside the building

We are trying to flee inside drawn by the primitive glow of the exit sign

ripe from nightmares of elementary school hallways and earthquake drills mid collapse we'd run to EXIT

this time we're allergic to Outside the Earth the house that is on fire

and we turn a last resort to the sterile the impenetrable White Wall

our sworn enemy defined for so long as hostile barrier

not looking too shabby now

in vain hope mid suffocation to find relief there for our lungs

Our Black Tar Lungs

from underneath its slanted shadow skirt the rusty fire escape with its treacherous light signs beckons refugees in rusty wasteland we stare longingly at suspended stairs, wishing we could climb shreds of light

blinded by vain vain hope that one of those doors who cares if the rustier or less rusty the more or less absurd opens and there is more than more white wall behind