

I want to tell you about a dream I had.

I wandered through a fancy party held in a mansion. All the guests were enjoying themselves, drinking, chatting, laughing. Only when I approached any group - they all froze. Became silent.

Soon as I took a few steps away, they'd go back to being happy party goers. No one wanted to talk to me. No one seemed to want me at the party.

So I wove my way between groups. Not speaking to any of them.

On the second floor I discovered a gallery filled with paintings. They covered the walls - some framed, some not. Some of the frames ornate. Some not.

Throughout the space were also paintings on easels. They were placed strangely and facing different directions - creating paths and deadends like a maze of artwork.

I worked my way through, taking in each piece... There were portraits of Dutch aristocrats, biblical scenes, still lifes of inanimate objects. Typical artwork you'd expect to find in a gallery.

Until I ended up at one painting in particular that stood alone at the far end of the room.

It was of a woman, her back turned to the viewer, and she stared at a black door. The woman had my haircut. She wore a dress I often wear. The black door in the painting pulsed.

I spun around. All the paintings now faced my direction.

But they weren't the same paintings I'd observed first passing through the gallery. They all portrayed scenes from my life from the past few months. Moments when I'd encountered the door. It felt as though each painting stared silently into me.

It's like each black door in each painting dared me to stare back into them. Not knowing what else to do, I shielded my eyes with the palms of my hands and ran through the gallery - knocking over eistles as I went.

Until... until... I bumped into a body.

Uncovering my eyes, I saw a grey suit. A left hand missing a ring finger.

"Why'd you do this to me?" I asked him.

"All I did was help you see something that was already there," he said. "Had always been there."

"What the hell does that mean?" I asked.

"It's just your shadow," he said. He pointed behind me - over my shoulder.

I turned.

My shadow spread across the ground and cast itself across the nearest wall. But as it climbed the wall my shadow transformed into the black door.

"Why are you afraid of your shadow?" He asked.

I turned back around to answer him. He was gone.

But the door - my shadow - was still there.

{A beat}

The mansion was empty. The party guests disappeared. The gallery no longer held any artwork on easels or on the walls. Every room I walked into - all that was there was the black door.

"Why are you afraid of your shadow?" He'd asked... like he was explaining something to a child.

{A beat}

I don't have a good answer to that question.

So I'll ask you: *Why should I be afraid of my shadow?*