

The Fear that Kills

by Nina Kiriki Hoffman

The fear that kills and the fear that shrivels people's testicles don't speak to each other.

The fear that kills is tired of its job. The outcome is always the same; only the timing is different. The fear that kills seeps into a welcoming mind and twangs the nerves tighter until, sooner or later, the host drives off a cliff or shoots itself to kill the fear that kills.

The fear that kills wants to have a drink with the fear that only makes people jump and scream. The fear that kills longs for stories about the minor powers of mice and static electricity and people who pop out of closets.

The fear that kills thinks it might be nice not to have to kill. The fear that kills wonders if a life without killing has any meaning.

The fear that kills would like to meet the fear that excites, for dinner. Maybe if the fear that kills can seduce the fear that excites, they can change.

The fear that kills dreams about the hope that survives, but only once.

The fear that kills takes a shower and puts on its skeleton suit and goes to work.

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