

The Apartment
by Thaddeus Coleman

Today I woke up at 6:37 but I didn't get out of bed until 10:40. Right now it's 12 noon and I still haven't left my apartment. I'm sitting at the corner table drink coffee listening to the rain and thinking. I have a lot to debt about and I really need to be alone right now.

I take a slip of coffee and just stare blankly out the window. The rain is almost rhythmic. Tap, tap. Tap, tap, tap. Tap, tap. It's strange how rhythmic it is. There's almost a joy to it. Tap, tap, Tap. Tap, tap, tap. But the rain seems to only be able to express this joy when it takes it away from the rest of the world. Outside is dull and grey and empty and lonely. Not unlike this apartment and it's all because the rain wanted a song. I suppose there are a lot of things like that in this world.

I take another slip of my coffee and let my eyes wander around the room. The curtains for the window are white and thin. They were there when I bought the place. Outside the window is a grey fire exit that matches the rainy world. To the right of the window, the curtains, and fire escape are light baby walls. Roll my eyes up and they meet the white ceiling, roll them down and the walls transition into a carpeted floor. Even though on the opposite side of the room there's nothing in here to my view of the wall. I pick my coffee swivel my chair to the right to continue the tour. There's a door. A worn brown door and next to it a small table where I keep my books. And then more walls.

Ring! Ring! The telephone sounds. I swivel my chair back around to the counter and stare at the phone. I'm not going to answer it. It's my day out today. And I just want to be here. The phone rings for a little while more and then stops, the answering machine picking it up. "John, this is Eric Wells of Sun Bank. It's urgent that we get in touch. Please call me at 314-832-5555."

The rain really throws me off. I was thinking about what I was going to do, but then this. I look at my coffee cup—it's half empty. I stand up with the cup and walk over to the sink and pour it down the drain. Then I get into my bed and stare at the ceiling. I try to think of a time when I wasn't like this. A few come to mind, but I've always had these episodes. Even now I'm not always like this. It's just more frequent now. I turn over in the bed and try to think of when these episodes started to become more frequent, but it's impossible. Through the years different feelings and events made them happen. It's been too long anyway. I close my eyes and try for sleep, but like clockwork my mind feels with images and thoughts and memories and junk I can't deal with right now. Or stuff I don't want to deal with right now. I try harder. I shut my eyes so hard it hurts. I dig my nails into my thigh and just try to focus on that pain. It eventually works and fall I asleep.

The sun is shining. Students in-between classes are talking and playing. The more studious ones are studying. It really does look like a nice day. Everyone is happy. I'm in that scene too. I'm sitting down a table with Matt and Terri from Bio class. Sean, a friend of Terri, Ashley, from Roman Lit, and another girl are also sitting with us. Everyone is conversing and I inject here and there, but I don't feel right. I there and I'm talking, but I feel like a stranger. Like I'm not part of this picture, like I just wonder in uninvited. It doesn't feel like I'm unwelcomed, just disconnected. I stop talking for awhile and just watch them. Matt arguing why Broken Flowers is such a great film to Ashley; who feels that the movie was entirely too slow and a waste of her afternoon. I turn from them look at some students throwing around a football. No matter where I turn it feels the same. Like I'm a sick kid who's watch the world through his bedroom window. I can't stand it. I get up and walk away from the table. No says anything. They just keep going on with their business, so I do the same.