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Brain Dance

### Walls: An Extended Metaphor

My father was never a religious man, but he sure did preach forgiveness. He would say, “you might be upset with me now, but you’ll forgive me.” Each slurred syllable was followed by the deep scent of whiskey. “I’m making you a man.” I was only six when he preached his first lesson. I stared at the walls until he gripped my chin and turned my attention to his eyes. His dark gaze tore at my skin like tiny shards of green glass. His eyes followed mine while his hands wandered along my skin. **I didn’t feel like much of a man then and I didn’t now.**

It was Cram Night in the common, as my doormates named it, when my mother gave me a call. Her breath was shaky while she delivered the news and I dropped my literature notes to the ground. She told me about my father’s quiet passing as I gathered the sheets of loose leaf. I shoved them into my binder, but stopped when I came across one page from the first day of class. The word “*courage*” faced me in big, bold letters. Funny, right?

Wrong. I stood in the doorway of my childhood bedroom. The comforter laid neatly and four pillows were placed methodically in a uniform order. It was my room, but it felt kinda empty. My mother sold my matchbox cars and action figures a while ago, yet I expected them to be there for some odd reason (Thomas). One thing remained the same, though: the walls were still covered in the ugliest shade of green I had ever seen. I placed my duffle bag on the bed and

plopped down next to it. My mother always hated the wall color, too. She said it was “unsettling” for a child’s room, but she never painted over it. **The walls almost taunted me** (Thomas). Every night, when my father would crawl into my bed, I turned to them for help. My eyes would skip over the chipped paint to the the ink stains from my artsy phase; that only lasted for the first week of kindergarten before I discovered astronauts.

I hoped that the walls would remain a distant memory, but they still bothered me years later. **My head filled with busy thoughts that made no sense**. It was then that I came to a realization: my father lived in these walls. His terrible eyes resembled the olive shade so closely (Groth). The paint held a steady glare and I felt as if he were there with me. One would say I was traumatized by the event, but I was truly traumatized by these damn walls.

I suffered through the trauma by myself, though. Not a single person, other than my father, knew how the room affected me. **My friends thought I was over sensitive and strangers thought I was just too introverted to speak** (Groth). Sometimes, I wish people knew what it was like to **panic over a simple structure**. I wish they heard the questions I asked myself. ***Did I cause this? Could I have stopped him?*** Above all, I wish people would stop labeling me as if they knew what it was like to live in fear of your father and the color green (Difede). But then again, I pray that nobody has to experience what I do. I know that I’m not the only one who lives on edge; **7 out of 100 people can relate** (Emery). I remember hearing that statistic in psychology class a while back. It was the only thing that stuck with me. I had been tired of **feeling weak and helpless**, so I bought a can of white paint after that psych class. It had been under my bed ever since.

After eleven years of being a victim, I decided to put a damper on the nausea and the nightmares (Emery). With a paintbrush in hand and the furniture cleared, I took an uneasy breath. I felt like a man for once in my life as I set a gentle stroke of purity against the harsh green that I had always known. When the room glistened like a coat of snow, I sat on the floor and felt at peace.

I forgive you, Dad.