

You're Not Welcome

Kristi Riley

My house.

You're not welcome.

My yard is beautiful with the freshly fallen snow,
But the wind is harsh and the air is dry.
I watch with a knit blanket covering my toes.
While sipping a coffee, I say with a sigh...

"You're not welcome."

The walls are ugly, outdated yellows.
I think I'll paint them white and gray.
My bed is comfy but needs more pillows.
"I know!"
I'll search on Amazon and Ebay.

You're not welcome.

I spend an hour... or two... or three on my phone.
Scouring the great wide web for the perfect home.
That pillow is too big. Ooo, I like this collection!
My kids are crawling on me, I ignore their affection.

You're not welcome!

As I wait for the perfect home to arrive... tick tock tick...
I head over to the hardware store for some gray acrylic.
Purse, keys, mask, gloves, sanitizer, two meter sticks...

I run in like Saint Nick- so lively and quick.

You're not welcome.

The trip to the store, just one store, wears me out.

"THIS IS SO FRUSTRATING!" I start to shout.

My husband tells me to slow down. I look pale.

I storm off to bed as I begin to wail.

You're not welcome.

My daughter comes in and rubs my cheek.

I am a horrible mother! Why am I so weak?

She wipes away my tears and strokes my hair.

I should love and comfort her! This is not fair!

You're not welcome.

My son wants to show me his lego fortress.

"Maybe later", I respond with a long sigh.

He looks to the ground, eyes empty and hopeless.

His silent response, again, makes me cry.

You're not welcome.

The next day, I have energy to paint.

One room is a good goal then I'll quit.

Up and down, up and down. I feel faint.

One quarter of a wall? Really? That's it?

You're not welcome!

God! Why me? Why now?

In 2020, I finished my academics.

Then you sent a global pandemic.

I'm alone. I'm scared. I'm stuck in my house.

The jobs are dried up, the bills fall-on my spouse.

You're not welcome!

What do I do? What can I do?

I'm sick. I'm in pain.

What's wrong with my brain?

My nails are bleeding. I'm going insane.

You're not welcome!

Leave me! Leave my body, you demon!

Can't you hear my cries? Jesus, I'm screamin'!

Return to the abyss with the RED DEVIL!

My body is not your home! Good-bye! Go to hell!

You're not welcome!

You're not welcome!

YOU'RE NOT WELCOME!

Dear God, please, finish my lesson.

I'm suffering here. Don't you understand?

Then I stop... and remember the Passion.

I am sorry.

Father? If it is your will, I will come home.
But I am not ready. I need more time.

Please don't be mad as I continue to fight.
This cancer has set my priorities right
Dacarbazine, vinblastine, Adriamycin, Bleomycin
Oh, Lord, if this is my day, please, forgive all my sins.

Submission.
Remission.
Relapse.
Collapse.

(Pause)

Ding-dong.
The pillows are here.
I trip on some legos.
Then it all becomes clear.

In my home.
You are welcome.

Doesn't God say to love thy enemy?
But who knew it was the cancer within me?

In my home.
You are welcome.

But, please.
Don't stay long.