

The Angle

Volume 1981 | Issue 1

Article 13

1981

Things Unseen

Laurie Collins
St. John Fisher College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

[How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?](#)

Recommended Citation

Collins, Laurie (1981) "Things Unseen," *The Angle*: Vol. 1981 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1981/iss1/13>

This document is posted at <https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1981/iss1/13> and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.

Things Unseen

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"I walked to the sliding glass door, which led to the patio, now empty of the redwood furniture my father had built. I knew the patio was out there and I knew the furniture wasn't, even though a sheet of plastic covered the door and obscured my vision. The plastic was put up to keep the cold winds from escaping through the unseen crevices around the door, although I couldn't see why it would matter anymore. I could hear the winds blowing and I knew they were cold winds, but I couldn't feel them."

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: 1981.

Things Unseen

By Laurie Collins

I walked to the sliding glass door, which led to the patio, now empty of the redwood furniture my father had built. I knew the patio was out there and I knew the furniture wasn't, even though a sheet of plastic covered the door and obscured my vision. The plastic was put up to keep the cold winds from escaping through the unseen crevices around the door, although I couldn't see why it would matter anymore. I could hear the winds blowing and I knew they were cold winds, but I couldn't feel them.

I stood in the middle of my old bedroom and I remembered. I turned my back to the door and faced the room. I saw the large, antique bed, though I knew it no longer filled the room. There would be no more sleepless nights in that too-big bed, with that pillow at one side of me and the wall at the other side, surrounding me in security.

I always believed then that there was a ghost waiting for me just beyond the darkness. I could not see the ghost, but I knew it was there. It would step out into the long beam of light that came from the hall and stretched half-way across the floor. I never got as far as imagining what the ghost would look like. I never thought past the fear I would feel if it were to step from darkness into light.

As I stood in that empty room, I heard my voice call out from so long ago- "Mommy"-into the silence of the house. I lay terrified of the ghost, needing reassurance so I could sleep.

But as I stood there I didn't hear the silence of my sleeping family, but a lonely silence, one that can only come from an empty house.

Mom would say there couldn't possibly be a ghost in our house because we built it ourselves. Any ghost that would inhabit our house would have to have lived here at one time, she said. Logical explanations wouldn't help a ten-year-old girl afraid of the dark. But this ghost, this phantom of all my fears, was being kept awake just as I was.

The empty room was so still. The cold winds howled and carried me back again. I heard mom calling to me to be quiet because dad was resting -- he had to be up early in the morning. Was dad resting now? Was he able to sleep or was something keeping him from resting in peace?

Death is a ghost, but with one difference -- my ghost never came out of the darkness to frighten me, but my father's did.

I stood in the middle of my old bedroom and remembered. The fear of that ghost had faded.

I'm not afraid of the dark in the bedroom of the house which my husband and I now share. But at night, I hear the frightened voice of my daughter calling out to me. I smile a knowing smile and answer her. Now I can honestly give her the reassurance she needs to sleep.