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Knocks

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Knocks

There came upon my door three knocks, hard to ignore. The first was a gentle rap, no harder or louder than a tap. I had three dead bolt locks, I opened to answer the knock. When the door stood ajar I saw a stranger from afar, one that I had never met, one that I would never forget. He took me by the hand, showed me the pleasure of a man--a hunger that had never been fed, and words that had never been said--not to me, in all my life. Later, he said, he'd call me wife. He said I was his everything, he bought me a shiny gold ring. I thought at last I had won, what poets write about, and singers sung. Then my palace came crashing down. From the heavens I fell to the ground. Blue eyes betrayed my sacred crown. The golden fruit died, turned brown. So, in a daze, a fog, I walked--alone, as memories haunted, stalked my mind everywhere I went. I believed your knock was heaven sent. How could such golden fruit, be laden with decay, be stolen loot?

There came another knock on my door. I pondered, should I ignore? Yet, I thought, take a chance once more, experience can only enhance what will come to me now.
I opened the door & the stranger bowed. This was not the face of the one before, he led me to a different shore than to which I had been. This is where women were made men. He had me to bind my hair and I was given battle uniforms to wear. My legs were made to run, my body sweat in the Carolina sun. Black leather boots on my feet-- I learned to march to the cadence beat. An M-16 placed in my hand-- Laying my body in the sand, trying to ignore the Drill's bark. My muscles torn and spirit broke-- I wiped my tears as I choked on the burning hot white gas as they pulled off my mask. Weeks passed and soon I was done I longed for laughter, for fun. Three years in uniform I stayed, though I wanted to run away-- Away from the guns, the heat, though my spirit broke, it was not beat.

The third knock came loud upon my door. I was weary, but opened as before. The stranger took me to a musty place. All around were books, no open space. I chose a path that shone bright-- looked laden with interesting sights. I read and wrote and learned, the more I read, the more I yearned for something more, something new. The halls had but a chosen few that knew where they were going, the rest of us were like a river flowing, pushed by an unseen, indirect force. Not many knew where the course
would end, or when it lost direction.
Confused, dazed, almost done
is our time here, in these halls--
no time for rewinds, no time for recalls--
Our path is set, and many fret
for the one chosen, there are regrets.
Too soon the door is closing--
standing on the threshold, I'm frozen,
afraid to cross the bridge that waits,
I try to breathe softly, waiting for fate--
And I know I must answer the door
as I've done before.

--Cassandara Dings