

Pusha Petrov

by Andrei Cherascu

And so, this whole dramedy happened because, in a building, in a city where everyone made a mockery of heritage, the two of us, living one above the other, are crazy about these things. And the truth is that, when you keep an object for a year and a half, when it's not yours, it becomes yours. Mentally. You become attached to it.

The story goes as follows: those doors you know, they provided access to our interior courtyard. When the facade was renovated, the decision was made to replace the doors. One of our neighbors, Mr. Beck, took care of this. He was supposed to give them to us, and he simply disposed of them.

Beck wanted to get rid of them. He didn't care that we had decided we were going to salvage them. To him, it's just garbage, you know?

When I came back from Paris and saw that they were gone and the place was empty, I went straight to Mr. Beck. His reaction was: "The doors are gone, that's it, they were burned! They're gone! There was no more use for them, the wood was decayed, they had to be thrown away!"

I was so upset about this that I wrote to the former tenant who had lived in the apartment above ours, whose daughter now lives there. And I'm writing to her all upset and disappointed, going, "I can't believe it! We always talk about others throwing away or destroying heritage objects and now in our very own building, right under our noses, these doors were burned down."

And she says, "But they weren't burned down. They're upstairs, at Bogdana's" – Bogdana is her daughter.

"Upstairs?"

"Yup, well, Petre retrieved them because Mr. Beck was going to throw them away. He took them up to the first floor."

When I found out they were upstairs, I went up to Bogdana and she said, "All right, let's not make a scene out of this. We're neighbors, let's not create any unwarranted tension. One of these days I'll ask my husband to bring them down to you." But the doors were already prominently displayed in their home.

She and her husband run a woodworking company. They make great stuff. The idea was that they were using them as background for their products. I mean, they're great for ambience, as far as doors go. And I said, "Okay."

I really wanted them to become our friends. She's a singer and he's a woodcrafter – there were so many things connecting us. And, well, I just didn't want any conflict.

Time started passing... a month went by, two months, three months... and the doors never showed up. Half a year goes by, and I meet them in the hallway. Everybody is smiling and I keep thinking, "Okay, when am I going to get my doors?" So, I let time pass, and inadvertently the object grew on them even more.

A year goes by.

For Christmas, she comes over and offers me a present and I offer her some presents for her kids. And, well, she sort-of lets us know they're going to move... but there's no mention of THE thing.

Then I get a text from her, in which she tells me, "Look, we really want these doors," and she sends me a project. And my jaw drops. Because, well, it's a project wherein they were going to install them as

sliding doors in their new house. And I felt so... you know, she already came to me with a project, man! She's the owner. That's how she sees herself – she's the new owner.

And now I'm obstinately thinking, "Man, I don't even know what I'm going to do with these doors. I just know I really want them! How do I reclaim them?"

I was awkward. The awkwardness was setting in. I have this awkwardness about me and I'm almost losing my object and they're taking advantage of my unease.

The whole time I thought, "Man, she just had a baby, I can't bother her about the doors." She has two little children, one is two months old, the other two and a half years old. There's a certain effervescence surrounding her, she's busy with her life, she has no time to think about the doors...

So, I asked for it once, twice, if it didn't happen... I was awkward, okay? Especially since they were going to bring it to us. I sort-of always said to myself, "Well, she had a baby, she's busy, I'll wait." Then I would see her, we would say hello... you know, it's like it was all my imagination. Then I realized it's not my imagination because, well, they were planning to take them somewhere else. It was all planned... thought out... I mean, you know, they were always planning not to give them up. It's not hard to fall in love with these doors.

I understand that they sort-of... you know, I think it also has to do with the fact that her husband brought the object into their home. He brought it home!

So, the second day after the e-mail I sent to her, in which I said, "Those don't belong to you, you can't have them, I need to get them back," she said "Okay, fine, come over tomorrow."

I felt uneasy about going in there... I felt like a thief. /felt that way – that was the problem. She told me her husband was going to be home later, but we could come by anytime, even now...

Andrei was home. He said, "Let's go now! The two of us... now! We're not waiting for anybody!" And we brought them down ourselves.

So, basically, I realize that I feel awkward about other peoples' awkwardness. It's awkward for me to confront you. But most of the time, these people act on your own awkwardness.

A month ago, she wrote to me again, saying they would like to buy the doors from us, that they keep looking for an old door and can't find one and wouldn't we like to sell ours? And then I said, "Well, I just want to tell you that the doors are going to end up in an exhibition. Just so you understand how I see this and how you see it."

You know what? I think the story got interesting because, actually, the coincidence was that two people, living one above the other, saw the same potential in it. We would each make use of it differently, but it's actually pretty ordinary. The attachment is clearly ours.

And, well, I feel happy when I look at the doors. It gives me comfort. I don't know, it feels like it's the house where Andrei and I live and I... that's... that's the centerpiece. It's in the kitchen too, in the heart of the house. I think it's like a small victory over my own awkwardness and fears.

I really feel though that it's incomplete since it's just the one piece... so incomplete. I feel like I betrayed it because I separated it from the other piece. It's not the same. It was a whole, it was... it was HER... THE DOOR... now it's a door, or a part of a door. I swear, it lost its... it's not the same. And that space had a certain... it brought balance to the wall. Now that space is far too big for a door. That's why I'm going to move it soon. I'll create another context for her where she can feel better by herself.

Ivan Mudov

by Stefan Ivanov

when I saw this door
the first thing I thought
was how when I was little I accidentally locked myself out
and I couldn't open the door for hours
in the first few minutes I suddenly became religious
and I knelt down and began to pray
and I promised not to look for the chocolate hidden in the kitchen
so that I can eat it in secret
I thought it was some kind of punishment
this closed door was like a big unblinking eye
and it judged and watched me all the time
after a while and after I cried
I calmed down and decided I could give it a try
to live in the kitchen for a day
I would be there for a long time
I had to be patient and calm
I lasted about two minutes
and I began to pray again
I got tired and fell asleep on the ground

I also locked myself out on the stairs as a child
when I was left home alone once
I had climbed onto a chair to look through the spyhole
and I thought I saw something strange
I opened the door to check
and only when it closed itself
I realized I wouldn't be able to go back in
even if I pushed with all my might
I knocked on the neighbors' door and rang the bell
there was no one home
I went down to the first floor and knocked and rang again
the neighbor opened the door and in my memories
she's like the ageing marlene dietrich
wearing make-up with good manners distanced
and with an eternal cigarette in her hand
I tried to explain to her what had happened
and she invited me in
I liked the smell in her house
perfume peace and quiet
we sat in the living room and she continued reading her book
and I stared at the paintings on the walls the vinyl records
and I waited for the wall clock to strike again
the more often it stroke
the sooner they would come home

my mother my father or my brother
would notice the note
which the neighbor left on the door – it said that I was with her on the first floor
and they would take me home

from then until today
31 years later
one of my biggest fears is to not lock myself in a room
from which I can't get out
or to get in front of a door I have to unlock
and I can't do it

I think that for all that time
I forgot my keys
only once or twice
I don't just mean the keys to the house
but keys to offices cars hotels places I visited
I also keep the key to the classroom at my elementary school
because I was in charge of the class in a way and I was entitled to a key
sometimes there is a practical benefit to fears
but sometimes they can paralyze you

I would like to when I look at this door
my first thoughts to not be related to fear
or any generally speaking minor traumas
and concerns about perhaps abandonment anxiety
or something like this

but to
for example
ask myself the following questions:

are there more doors or wheels in the world
what came first - the wheel the door or the fire
who lit the first door
if a door is opened without a key
a card or a fingerprint
do you need it
and is it a proper door
or a movable wall
or something like a window

why are doors needed
if we continue
somehow
to be in a way cavemen
in our thoughts and actions
and caves have no doors

I remember
of course
how important it was for me as a teenager
to be able to close the door to my room
and let no one open it without knocking first

I'm thinking of so many
songs movies pictures novels short stories and poems
about doors
I'm thinking of the doors that closed in front of my face
literally and metaphorically

I hope it never happens to me again
to have to punch a door and to cry
and to have not only the feeling
but also to know that if the door does not open
something terrible will happen

I also remember how I hit myself
in a very well cleaned glass door
which did not open automatically
I wonder if the door to the backyard
is jealous that the front door
gets more attention
or is it just the opposite
she enjoys being quieter and calmer
and enjoys the solitude

but really
which door I can't stop thinking about?
for the one that is closed maybe but not only
but I also seem to think of the one through which it is forbidden to enter
I've always been drawn to go where you shouldn't go
to open the door of a forbidden room
and open the closet
to look in the cupboards for boxes or cartons
to browse the books on the shelves
to look through the discs or paintings
and to explore until I quench my curiosity
and calm down

but who actually has the right to enter where he should not enter
where is prohibited
and who forbids and why
who has the right to forbid something
who makes these laws of everyday life and the world
is it accidental or necessary
and especially for how long they will be needed

are they here out of shame fear or trauma

is the truth a bad thing
as painful as it is
what do these always locked and inaccessible doors keep away
why transparency does not rule in the world of closed doors
what riches secrets and privileges are behind them
are there baths full of blood and manipulations
is there a refrigerator full of fresh lies

is there a library full of books
whose pages are banknotes
and their covers are of gold bars
why locked doors are a sign of power and success
why the lack of a high wall is a sign
not of openness
but of weakness
I wonder how lonely is
the always locked door
on which it is written do not enter

no one touches the door
everyone passes it by
in the world of doors that door could be the object of envy

if there are yellow press and gossip sites in the world of doors
there could be writings in them about these enigmatic and obscure stars
about their mystery and allure
about their silence and the logic of their existence
about their faith in the great big door in the sky
that created the whole world
or about their doubt of the creation

if I have to be honest
maybe every exclusive door
creates a sense of injustice
and provokes anger and hesitation
and casts doubt on its own significance
in personal value

the doors could also compare each other
and to dream of being more special with something
to be of different material
to have a more beautiful lock
to be harder
to be more expensive
to be more than the others

and whatever the old wise gate says
the gate from the standpoint of the centuries of experience
can easily give advice
which is worth hearing
and taken into account
and even followed
the young doors will laugh at the old gate
and will continue to want things
which will only continue to elude them
and will only make them sad
but this will continue for a while
after that they will most likely calm down
they will smile
they will rejoice in some simple things
such as that the man who is sheltered
behind them
is in love
he's having fun with his friends
and the door protects him from the wind the storm the rain the hail
and mostly from other people
which for various reasons
or just without much motivation
do not want
him to be happy or alive
and they would break down his door
and they would take possession of his house and country