

Life's Passage Lacks Courage

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Perhaps the first stage was unrecognizable; birth. The instinct to survive elicited a type of fear when food was not immediate.

Because food was provided by my mother, the fear manifested itself through her absence. Fear of separation.

As a child I watched television without understanding technology and especial effects. The horror was real and the faces of fear intensified, especially at night in the dark all alone. The faces peered between the cracks in my closet door. I could hear them under my bed or outside my window. They were alive and moving in the pile of clothes on the chair. My only salvation was to hide under my covers. I used my blanket as my shield.

As a teenager the fear took on a different face. Rejection, loneliness, and not being accepted by anyone, most of all, myself. This fear eroded any hope and so I sought a balm, some relief. Intoxicating elements and narcotics became the escape I needed. It was something easy to take me away. Insidiously, slowly, a face appeared. One I should have feared above all else.

So now I awake every night with sweat rolling down my face and my ears are pierced from my own screams. The soft white walls enclose me, and the chains keep me from running. They cage me like an

animal and say I am insane. Needle marks track along my arms from the doctors who say they are there to cure me. My hands tremble from the drugs that continue to affect my brain. The illusions of my lifelong nightmares have come to haunt me. I am alone, separated from the outside. I see monsters in my closet and creatures under my bed.