

Crawlspace Apocalypse

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (February 2023)



La Belle Dame sans Merci, Frank Dicksee, circa 1901-02

And I awoke, and found me here. –Keats

High-density polyethylene
in my modest Virginia mansion
encapsulates this in-between
of milky white expansion;

a dehumidifier constrains the moist,
despoiled spiders bawl,

the mold's been treated on the joist,
and no bugs crawl.

La belle dame sans merci
has trapped me in her δουλεία.
She's the queen of words, aiee!
Who'll stick it to ya.

No, there's no one left to foist
this on; no liquor's left to drain.
The mold's been treated on the joist,
and no bugs plane.

Unless you really look for it,
you won't find what you can't hope for.
Not expecting the unexpected?
Well, they're waiting at the door. [*]

[*] Cf. Heraclitus, fr. 18: ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπηται, ἀνέλπιστον οὐκ ἐξευρήσει, and the apparent paraphrase of it in Joe Orton's satirical farce *What the Butler Saw*: "Just when one least expects it, the unexpected always happens."

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Peter Richard Dreyer is a South African American writer. He is the author of *A Beast in View* (London: André Deutsch), *The Future of Treason* (New York: Ballantine), *A Gardener Touched with Genius: The Life of Luther Burbank* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press; new, expanded ed., Santa Rosa, CA: Luther Burbank Home & Gardens), *Martyrs and Fanatics: South Africa and Human Destiny* (New York: Simon & Schuster; London: Secker & Warburg), and most recently the novel *Isacq* (Charlottesville, VA: Hardware River Press, 2017).

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