

Reply to Lapo Gianni / Charles Wright

Lapo, we're all slow orphans under the cruel sleep of heaven.
We're all either creased and sealed or somebody's cough.

Outside the window, twilight slips on its suede glove.
The river is fine balsam, fragrant and nicked by cold feathers.
Under the grass, the lights go on in their marled rooms.

Lapo, the dreams of the dog rose are nothing to you and me.

The Closet Dwarf / Russell Edson

A man goes to a closet to fetch out his coat. He wants his coat. It is his. He has paid money for it. He may even want his umbrella and galoshes; and, of course, his hat.

Is this an unusual desire? He doesn't think so.

But then just inside the closet is a dwarf wearing his hat and coat, holding his umbrella and standing in his galoshes.

The dwarf puts his finger to his mouth and says, shhh, I'm not supposed to be here.

The man notices that his things are way too big for the dwarf. Those things don't fit you, he says.

I know, isn't it a shame? says the dwarf, but, oh well, we've got to make do with what we have . . .

Those are my things. They are in my closet. This closet is mine, it's in my house, says the man.

You know, says the dwarf, once you get dwarves in your closet they're almost impossible to get rid of, because they always lie . . .

You're not a closet dwarf, are you?

Me? Of course not. Why would you say that? Just because I'm a dwarf and I'm in your closet . . . Don't you believe in coincidences? . . .

Then what are you doing in my closet?

I must have taken the wrong turn. You see, I'm a coal miner; I thought this was a coal mine . . . all this coal on the floor . . .

Coal? Those are my shoes!