

Who's There?

*Dennis Payton Knight*

*"Knock, Knock."*

*"Who's there?"*

*"Anuh."*

*"Anuh who?"*

*"Anuhther week gone by and you still haven't written, you lazy bum."*

That is the dialog I deserved, dreaded and expected when I heard the knock. I knew what time and day it was, and I did not need someone at my door to tell me I had yet another essay to write and it was becoming very due. I had managed all week to avoid that tedium and it seemed unfair to bring it up at the last minute when I was in the middle of tryptophan euphoria brought on by a fine Sunday goulash replete with grandma's noodles, seconds all around, including a double dose of lemon bars.

And I hoped the knocking door did not signal another friend intervening to save me from that monkey on my back, food-induced procrastination. I know there must be a good twelve-step program for me somewhere in our town. I will look it up Monday. Or Tuesday.

I called back to the door, "Be right there." That bought me enough time to find and put on a robe. I could have used the minute to sneak out the back door and run around to see for myself who was knocking, but that assumes I have a back door, and I don't.

I do have a peephole, however, so I peeped through it. Unfortunately, a peep is considerably less than a view. It is a distorted field of vision just adequate to accommodate the nostrils or one eyeball of the party knocking, but only if that party is tall enough to fall into range. And that is only if the knocker wishes to reveal herself, or himself; otherwise, she or he may very well step to one side or even stoop to avoid identification. Brush salesmen and bill collectors commonly employ such practices. It is the nature of their jobs, and more power to them, but even they wouldn't be so unkind as to bug me on a Sunday night.

The rapping seemed to be coming from a point about thirty inches above the sill. "Why, it must be a midget," I surmised. But why would a midget come to my house to remind me of my obligations as an essayist? I do not know any midgets who would. In fact, I don't know any midgets, period.

Finally, I decided to just face the music. I opened the door. Waiting was an adorable munchkin in a green costume. "Trick or Treat!"

I told her she made a fine gremlin indeed, but Halloween was a week away, and I was already out of candy. I probed around the refrigerator, found a drumstick, and dropped it in her bag.

"Thank you, sir, for the lovely treat. Now I shall be on my way."

"You're welcome" I answered as she turned to leave, "but hold on, kid. The way you talk I'll bet you could write a fine essay." She starts next week.