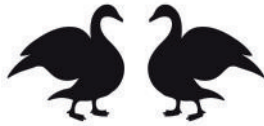


KURT LUCHS

I BELIEVE THERE WERE OTHERS



To keep myself awake I keep telling myself the old story of how I woke up in the room. Of course I don't know how I got here. Of course that doesn't concern me. The door is locked. That concerns me, but what can I do? I've screamed myself blue through the cracks to no end, not even a breeze in return. For all I know it's a closet and I've been pleading with some dead man's underwear. From what I can tell the air on the other side—if there is one—smells like the air in here: like walnuts. No, I haven't found any walnuts. No, I don't have amnesia. I know who I am. There's a mirror on the door for reminding myself, although the man in the glass looks every bit as mystified. I've pulled the lint from my pockets and run my fingers over the pores of stale paint on the walls that stare me down. I found a dead orb weaver hugging itself in a corner. Yes, there's a clock. Yes, it's stopped. It's been a quarter to nine for years. At times I feel sure I'm not the first. I'm positive I've seen someone else's footprints in the gathering dust where I pace for miles before I realize I'm following myself. I know things are happening at the corner of my eye. When I turn around suddenly to see if everything's the same, it always is, but in my heart another tree topples and I find it that much harder to believe in four yellow walls

and a light bulb. I believe there were others. I believe they emptied the medicine cabinet and left a deck for solitaire with the one-eyed jacks asleep. Also half a pack of cigarettes, but I don't smoke. I'm thinking of starting though.