

Picture Theme April 2018

#296



"Little Pink Houses" by Nate A. Lindell

BANG! A door slammed shut, followed by the slap/stomp of feet running up unupholstered stairs.

The bedroom door was swung open. A Black teenage boy stood there, looking in at a young Black girl. He stood there, eyes wide, panting, jacked from adrenaline, while she lay on her belly, her attention locked into the neighborhood she'd constructed of pink dollhouses.

"You runnin' from the police again?" she asked, without adjusting her attention. She picked up a doll, a realistic, tiny white girl, about her age.

"Yeah," the boy gasped, eyes darting around until they settled on a clothing hamper.

"Is Auntie here?" the boy asked, as he pulled a handgun out of his waistband and quietly tucked it under the clothes in the hamper.

"No," replied the girl. "She at your mom's."

The girl placed the miniature doll on the handlebars of the bike that another doll was riding. The other doll was an older man. She imagined the man to be the girl doll's father, lovingly taking her for a ride through the safe, bright, pleasant neighborhood that the girl had constructed. She imagined herself as the girl, imagined herself knowing who her father was, being with him, living in a safe, clean neighborhood.

"Damn cuz, you sure spend a lot of time on them dolls," the boy said, regretting having given her the toys, which he had stolen from some White folks' car. "Spendin' too much time with White folks," he grumbled.

The girl ignored him, lost in her role as God of the world she'd created. She was a good God.

Red and blue lights flashed through her bedroom window, coloring the wall. The "Whoop! Whoop!" of a siren confirmed that the police were, again, in front of the house.

"Oh! Cuz, I gotta hit it," the boy said, then fled out the door.

"Marquise Denton!" a voice shouted from a bullhorn. "We know you're in there. Come out with your hands up!"

But the boy was gone, having gone out of a second-story window on the side of the house, jumping to the balcony of the neighboring house, where his friend lived. He went inside, grabbed a jacket and a hat, ran downstairs to the basement, and went through a window into the backyard. In the alley, he unzipped and pissed on his hands, washing away the gunpowder residue.

Downstairs, in the girl's house, the police busted through the door, barking orders: "FREEZE!" "PUT YOUR HANDS UP!"

In another, higher dimension, there was a loud "BANG," followed by the sound of running, stomping feet, how we'd understand it. A being stood in a doorway, panting, eyes wide.

It looked at the child before ____.

"I told you to stop playing with them!" it thundered. "They're not toys!"

Turning, the child grinned, fire glistened within its eyes. It threw down the doll it had been holding.

The policemen fired their guns.

Note: Catherine LaFleur and James Bauhaus are consistently excellent writers. My best to both.

This tight short story is my essay for P.E.'s April 2018 photo theme.

It's my foray in urban surreal metaphysical fiction, based on real stories I've been told by Black gays from Milwaukee's inner-city.