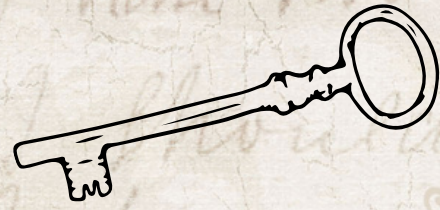


REJECTIONS

BY JOSEPHINE RENEE



1st January 2022

The ghost flame flickered up the curtains. 'Happy New Year' I whisper to the walls and the lone box on the vanity. I refused the annoying hum of the fan. The water was warm and filled higher than my patience usually allowed. My tailbone was bruised from where my body wasn't concave enough to follow the curve of the bath.

This year, I was going to get my manuscript published.

- *Thank you for submitting your query and pages to me here at KT Literary. Unfortunately, I am going to pass on asking to read the full manuscript of this book - I'm sorry. I wish you the very best in your agent hunt!*

16th February 2022

There was a place I liked on Albert Street with a dryer and a view. Because of covid you weren't allowed to touch anything and had a near-private inspection, except for this sweet, funny, old married couple. I remember spending the time in the bathroom, staring at my fractured reflection in the broken mirror. Knowing they would get it and this, its only flaw, would be fixed.

- *Dear Johanna, Thank you for your query and for your interest in The Knight Agency. Unfortunately, after reviewing your material, I have determined that it's not quite the right fit for me, and so I'm going to pass.*

Inspections with the tenants still in residence are awkward. Their lives are broken by boxes and you're standing there trying to picture your existence in the spaces between. Drawn to piecing back together the puzzle of who lived here and wondering how many supplements are truly necessary, what that brown patch is, and now knowing exactly where the overlap between dumbest humans and smartest babies meets, it's with you and the unexplored bathroom ahead.

- *Dear Johanna, Thank you so much for thinking of Nelson Literary Agency for your query. Even though your project isn't the right fit, it might be right for another agent so don't give up.*

The places with constriction were the worst, for the same price. You had to yell your questions at the agent and pretend you were interested as even these apartments that promised industrial deafness wouldn't accept you