

What Was, Is and Will Be
by Jeremy Damato

Gene hesitated before the door. The longer he waited the more uncertain he became. He had returned unexpectedly and wondered apprehensively how his arrival would be received? With welcome or estrangement?

He pressed the doorbell, and slowly exhaled an invocation. Seconds passed, the duration stiff and ungainly. Had he proven already too late? His hopes were gone but he had certainties. He was a liar, looking for whatever had survived. Spineless and weak, Gene had turned his back and rejected adulthood more often than not, flaunting his youth and ducking behind its defense when he needed an excuse. Consequently, at the age of thirty-one, what remained of his twenties was anxiety.

Gene's hands precariously filled the pockets of his faded raincoat. A tired look about him, disheveled, hair ruffled, face-stubble; he looked down at the threshold wistfully. Fingers at the locks sounded from inside. Marie inched the door open and peered out. Gene heard a child in the background. Her face had changed; the old glint was no longer in her eyes. Gene assumed a boyish smile and asked haltingly, his voice soft and tense at the same time.

“Is there by chance any soup?”

END