

*Keshia James*

## GONE



She left never to return. She said that she had to go, because freedom could not be claimed there in that house. No, not in that house, she said! She lived her entire life in that house. The house knew more about her than anyone in her life ever did. That's why when she left she knew she could leave without feeling sadness over having left, because she knew the house understood.

She left to go everywhere. The world was too big she claimed, too big, to live such a small existence. So she said goodbye to the house, to Nana and Papa, Libby, Rayla and Gorton. She said goodbye and she knew she would never return. When she was leaving, she entered every room in the house. She spoke to each room as if they were each individuals, because each room, in the years she had lived there, had seen different aspects of who she was. Each room had become like a familiar "friend". She said goodbye to each "friend" that day. The blue room, the green room and the room the color of puke were her favorites. She took her suitcase, worn plum colored and old as it could ever seem to be. It was the same suitcase her momma used years before when she was a little girl, to runaway to a place, any place faraway, to escape the wrath of her daddy who didn't know what to do with his built up rage. She didn't run far though, 'cause her daddy caught her, by the collar, just as she was about to step her tiny left foot out the front door. Her momma never tried to leave again.

She left that day and I remember the sky was gray, reflecting the sadness that stained the air. The clouds were moving fast as if they were in a hurry to speed up time, so that the rain could fall soon. I remember thinking that the rain, soon to fall, would stop her from leaving, but I should have known that nothing would stop her. Nothing could. The rain fell and she took the plum colored suitcase and her black umbrella and walked slowly in the rain, on the rocky road that she fell on when she was a child and busted her lip. I remember too, 'cause it bled so badly, she cried for days. She walked like a slow-motioned figure. I thought that she might not want to go, but yet I knew better. She wanted to go. She had to go.

She left that day and no one has heard her voice since. She writes sporadic letters to her mother, who yearns for words, lots of words to compensate for not hearing her voice. She speaks of her health. She speaks of the weather. She won't be coming back. I know this. We all know this. But we stay. We stay because this is the only home that we know, that we want to know. She left never to return, 'cause she said her world was too small and the world out there was too big. So she has gone to re-create her world. She has gone to become again. I have always wondered how? How do you become again? How do you make small big? I do not know. She will discover the answers, I hope, and maybe she will be who she desires to be, and happiness, her happiness will be claimed, because in the house, on the rocky road, it did not dwell.