

Annalee Smith

Instructor's Name

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Date

Inventory of a Dead Old Man's Refrigerator

Directly in the center of the massive opened refrigerator and situated on the most-accessible shelf stood two monuments: an enormous can of processed cheese and an industrial-sized container of Pace picante sauce. Around and behind these two pillars clustered the jarred condiments: Great Value mustard, Armour sliced and dried beef, sweet gherkins, a container of what looked like gelatinous brown spit labeled "Fig Jelly 1993," and a square bottle of A1 sauce. Crusted cheese, fatty unidentifiable chunks, and a wayfaring olive danced or jiggled along the grooved plastic lanes.

Above this shelf stretched a large, dimly lit vacancy, and below it was a wet pyramid of bagged, bald, rotting fruit: oranges, apples, a pear, gray grapes, and one-half of a tomato. Aged coleslaw, whose fuzzy pastel appearance seemed reminiscent of a young lady's spring wardrobe, rested near an opened and uncovered can of Old Roy dog food. The combined odor of these two items was vomit inducing.

In the shallow door of the arctic wasteland, a column of Sunsweet prune juice cans in purple and yellow metallic uniforms laced the dirty shelves. Nine bottles—yes, nine bulging bottles—of burnt-orange French salad dressing leaned against the metal guardrail. Yellowed rubber lined the inner perimeter, and a rainbow of stains from unknown sources designed the plastic walls. An open box of baking soda stood alone in the top right-hand corner, and one clove of garlic squatted beside what seemed an endless row of neon-orange prescription medication

bottles—pills for relieving pain, inspiring sleep, restoring memory, and helping with many other things that make up the essence of life.

On the outside, an avocado-green textured door displayed an assembly of faded Post-It notes, featuring shakily scribbled words that resembled the doodles of a young child. Two autumnal-toned dishtowels coiled through the rectangular handle, and a collage of old photographs covered the remaining bulk of the fridge's exterior. Balanced in the center of all the space hung Sunday's church bulletin, hosted by a magnet, which in bold letters promised "Joy Comes in the Morning."

The door closed slowly; the vent moaned.