



Now cancer is in the room

I do best one-on-one
I'm what I call a one-on-one
person. I have, and thrive on,
deep connections,
honest raw
conversations. Delving into what matters.
Laughing about the darkness too.
Sure, I can work in a group setting but
for the most part, like 98%,
it is not my first choice.
But now, someone else is in the room
and I did not invite them. I did not even subtly
welcome them. I am positive I never
unlocked the door
let alone
left it ajar. It's not my way.
I am careful with doors and locks.
I learned young to barricade doorways,
my feeble attempt to
keep people out. I was always on alert
for intruders even if
they were my caregivers.
And since, I've always locked the door
to our home.
We live in the middle of nowhere.
Far down a country road
in the woods. I'm sure
most of my neighbors and
many of my friends never do.

But from a childhood of terror and
a young adulthood of criminal
break-ins, I don't take chances. Chances are for
those naïve to my experiences.
And this time, I don't see how
they slithered in. I don't.
I'd never allow for that. Yet, before I knew it,
before I was able to brace, prepare, hide, or protect
they were inside, getting all comfy
without permission.
Ok, I admit, we did go to the ER...not
by calling 911 though—it wasn't like we
alerted anyone—giving them an opportunity
to sneak in. We did, however
head out in the middle
of the night. We found our way there,
not a single car was on the road.
There were no headlights
blinding us even for a brief moment.
Going to find help for relentless pain
and we did find it.
But in the finding, we seemed to have
opened the door
to one we did not wish to meet, ever. And now,
no matter where we sit—car,
couch, chairs, even the bed
or what we eat or how we move—they are here.

A harsh unwanted
presence peering over our shoulders.
Making dark sweat
marks on the tweed couch, imprinting it with
an unfamiliar stench.
And I am odor sensitive too!
I did not, nor never would,
invite them.
They want to grow, take over,
take you over,
to fill you.
But then where does
that leave me? I did not marry them.
I did all I could to stay away
from their kind
the manipulative bottom feeders.
Those that suck
the life literally
from you.
I did my best to not feed them.
But neither my best, nor yours,
was good enough.
Now we need to
learn how to be a threesome,
and like I mentioned before,
I am not that type.

— Debra Kiva