

Junior Division, Poetry

Jade Collins, Gambo

You Aren't Trying Hard Enough (an excerpt)

I square my shoulder and throw my body against the door,
Praying that I can brute force my way out of this nightmare.

My heart leaps as it gives ever so slightly,

But my door does not open.

I even try to take it off its hinges,

Fighting not just to escape, but to hold onto fading hope,

But I hear the speaker crackle again.

"That's not allowed," I manage to pick through the noise.

I feel suffocated.

Between the helplessness of a situation no one seems to understand,

And the relentless chanting to just open the damn door,

It feels like someone's hand has coiled around my neck.

The other two grow frustrated.

"Just turn the doorknob! How hard can it be? I did it, look at me!"

They don't understand when I tell them that it is easy to say that when you have a doorknob to turn.

"Open the door! Pull yourself up and do it!"

I cover my ears and sink to the floor, and yell to the sea of voices,

"I can't!"

Silence.

But only briefly.

That would be too kind.

A voice crackles over the speaker.

"You aren't trying hard enough."