REBECCA
WHO SLAMMED DOORS FOR FUN AND PERISHED MISERABLY
by Hilaire Belloc

A Trick that everyone abhors
In Little Girls is slamming Doors.
A Wealthy Banker’s Little Daughter
Who lived in Palace Green, Bayswater
(By name Rebecca Offendort),
Was given to this Furious Sport.

She would deliberately go
And Slam the door like Billy-Ho!
To make her Uncle Jacob start.
She was not really bad at heart,
But only rather rude and wild;
She was an aggravating child...

It happened that a Marble Bust
Of Abraham was standing just
Above the Door this little Lamb
Had carefully prepared to Slam,
And Down it came! It knocked her flat!
It laid her out! She looked like that.

abhors: hates
deliberately: purposefully; intentionally
aggravating: annoying
bust: a sculpture showing a person’s head, neck, and shoulders
Her funeral Sermon (which was long  
And followed by a Sacred Song)  
Mentioned her Virtues, it is true,  
But dwelt upon her Vices too,  
And showed the Dreadful End of One  
Who goes and slams the door for Fun.

The children who were brought to hear  
The awful Tale from far and near  
Were much impressed, and inly swore  
They never more would slam the Door,  
—As often they had done before.

Augustus was a chubby lad;  
Fat, ruddy cheeks Augustus had;  
And everybody saw with joy  
The plump and hearty, healthy boy.  
He ate and drank as he was told,  
And never let his soup get cold.

But one day, one cold winter’s day,  
He screamed out—”Take the soup away!  
O take the nasty soup away!  
I won’t have any soup today.”

Next day begins his tale of woes;  
Quite lank and lean Augustus grows.  
Yet, though he feels so weak and ill,  
The naughty fellow cries out still—  

“Not any soup for me, I say:  
O take the nasty soup away!  
I won’t have any soup today.”

ruddy: rosy in color, as a sign of health  
lank: thin
The third day comes: O what a sin! 
To make himself so pale and thin.
Yet, when the soup is put on table,
He screams as loud as he is able—

"Not any soup for me, I say:
O take the nasty soup away!
I WON'T have any soup today."

Look at him, now the fourth day's come!
He scarcely weighs a sugar-plum;
He's like a little bit of thread,
And on the fifth day, he was—dead!

---

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She'd scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones,
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crust and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned buttered toast,
Grisly bits of beefy roasts....

candy: to cook in a heavy sugar syrup until glazed

sugar-plum: a small, ball-shaped candy
The garbage rolled on down the hall,
It raised the roof, it broke the wall...
Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,
Globs of gooey bubble gum,
Cellophane from green baloney,
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,
Peanut butter, caked and dry,
Curdled milk and crusts of pie,
Moldy melons, dried-up mustard,
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,
Cold french fries and rancid meat,
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.
At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky.
And all the neighbors moved away,
And none of her friends would come to play.

And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,
"OK, I'll take the garbage out!"
But then, of course, it was too late...
The garbage reached across the state,
From New York to the Golden Gate.
And there, in the garbage she did hate,
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!

rancid: spoiled; having a foul smell or taste
Cream of Wheat: a brand of breakfast porridge

Golden Gate: the strait connecting the San Francisco Bay in California with the Pacific Ocean; also the name of the bridge that spans the strait