



## Kelcey Parker, “Estate Sale at the Interior Castle”

Lately I’ve been reading my college copy of St. Teresa of Avila’s *Interior Castle*, which combines two of my obsessions: women writers and houses. Especially 16<sup>th</sup>-century women writers who write in a fever, and houses that are actually castles, castles that are actually souls, souls that are diamonds, diamonds that are filled with many rooms, rooms that are at once inside of us and needing to be entered. It’s an M.C. Escher/Italo Calvino kind of spirit world.

With Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* also tucked in the back of my mind, I’m working on a collection of Interior Castle stories, including “Murder at the Interior Castle,” featuring a female Poe-like narrator who is “not the best one to tell the story, but the only one.” In “Estate Sale at the Interior Castle,” Mrs. Butterworth’s small house is her castle, and her belongings, auctioned off at the estate sale, are relics of her inner self, her soul. At least, this is how her neighbor Mart sees it.

What also fascinates me about the *Interior Castle* is the constant qualifying and self-deprecation that, as a woman, St. Teresa must do: “Wise and learned men know them quite well, but we women are slow and need instruction in everything.” Or, “As I am so stupid in these matters, it has been no small thing that His Majesty should have enabled me to understand the meaning of this verse in the vernacular.” She makes a big show of humility; one might be tempted to say that the woman doth protest too much.



My work is populated with houses, which can be both refuge and prison, happy and haunted, spacious and confining. And of course women are historically imagined as either the angel of the house or the madwoman in the attic. The stories in my first book, *For Sale By Owner*, are domestic tales of women more or less trapped at home, or in homes that feel like the wrong homes, lives that feel like the wrong lives. **Visit the publisher’s page:**

<http://www.korepress.org/ForSaleByOwner.htm>

My forthcoming novella, *Liliane’s Balcony* (Rose Metal Press), is a semi-true domestic tragedy set at Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous Fallingwater house. Read the first chapter and an interview here: <http://talkingwriting.com/?p=640>

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