

Bystander

*Here given is a journal entry from one George Lydale, one of the original settlers of the Durham Colony. May his soul rest in God's infinite grace.*

Monday, August 23, 1610

Today I fear for my soul. Why in the Lord's great name have I been forsaken like this! Left here in this doomed colony to be devoured by beasts and demons; to be left rotting in the streets like so much carrion for the filthy vermin of this land! This land belongs to the Devil, that great snake who desires to swallow the world in its entirety! I write now for fear of losing myself to these

accursed memories, these sights which haunt me endlessly. Forgive me Lord, for bearing witness to such evil.

Scarce two hours past I recall being awakened by the terrible crashing of glass which called from beyond my window. The fog of sleep clung stubbornly to my mind, a result of my attending the late sermon - if only it had clung deeper still as to restrain me to my rest! - and it was a slow rise from bed to the window. Curse my bleeding curiosity! I could not resist peering through so as to ascertain what the source of the commotion may have been. O! My eyes and my mind have paid the price and I fear that I too may join them!

Down in the street, crouching in the darkness of night, I spied a peculiar figure, seemingly too large and monstrous for this world, who appeared to be deeply entranced by some organic mass - the contents of one's chamber pot I assumed O! How wrong I was! - and thus decided to take a closer look. Naturally I came to the conclusion that I would be wise to bring along my rifle, my most trusted companion, and trepidatiously ambled down to the ground floor. I fancied myself as some sort of assassin in how quiet I was, though in looking back I can see just how foolish I must have appeared had any onlooker been present. Nonetheless I pressed myself against the door to the street, finding myself to be experiencing terrible shivers which coursed through my body.

To add to my foolishness, I ignored the foreboding sensation and proceeded to slowly open the door, poking my head from around the corner in order to take a better look. Curse my infinite stupidity! Upon looking through the crack in my door I was once again struck by an intense foreboding, though this bout was sufficient to send my head careening and toss my whole frame

upon the floor. The result was a terrible crash which seemed to echo throughout the whole of Durham! Curse! Even the men up in Fort Hurley must have noted my fall!

I scrambled to my feet as quickly as was possible, clutching my rifle in my hands, but was stopped cold as my eyes met with its own. I found myself entirely unable to move, trapped by a fear greater than any I had ever known or likely ever will.

The eyes blazed a demonic fiery yellow, shedding a terrible light of their own on the deformed face of this creature who looked nearly human but for the elongated snout and sickeningly sharpened teeth, which protruded from the jaws so as to form a mess of bloody spikes which champed upon the organic mass upon the ground. The creature hunched over the lump, its thick, muscular frame blocking it from sight, but as it rose to its full height, which I suppose was close to three meters, to face me it was plainly exposed for me to see.

Lying in the street, being torn apart by the creature's talons and devoured was my dear Katherine. A terrible cry rose up in my throat, but I lacked the power to let it loose. The creature continued to gaze at me, staring into my eyes, as it feasted upon her corpse. It seemed to enjoy my company, or more accurately, my anguish. I know not for how long I stay crouched there, frozen in fear, nor do I remember mustering the will to raise the rifle towards the creature, but I remember clearly the thundering sound of the gunshot. A demonic cry went up from the creature and I watched it flee towards the forest with such great speed as I have never seen any creature on God's great Earth inhabit.

Still I sat there. I believe I may have vomited a couple of times, but at length I came to my senses and ventured to investigate the remains of my love, which lay just beneath her shattered window.

I shall never cease to curse my pitiful existence! Why would my God, master of all there is on this good Earth, send such a creature just to torment me? For though the creature crouched there, clawing and gnawing at Katherine's sweet flesh, never once did it consume any of it.