

Writing

I'm currently in the MFA program in writing at Hamline University. My short stories have won the local GPS Writing Contest multiple times (2006 Scott Imes Award with "The Closet War," 2010 first place with "Or Your Money Back"), and a short comic I wrote and illustrated ("Meg's Raptors") appeared in the 2007 anthology *Day in the Life*, also local. Clearly, I need to get a writing life outside the Twin Cities. My first published short story appeared July 2010.

"No and the Walking House" was published in the inaugural issue of Kazka Press. The editors wrote: "It's tough to create memorable, believable characters in such a short space, but Nicole Lorenz does so with her No with energy, sharp language, and a strong sense of direction. We're proud to have her short story, No and The Walking House, as our first published short story here at Kazka Press."

The story begins:

No's hands were small for her age, and her parents never held them. Her mother, a militant hypochondriac, refused to so much as pat the child's hair except during a bath. Her father liked only grown-up things like online stock trading and arranging his class syllabi, so he usually held a laptop instead of a little girl. They had no other children. By the time No was five, she had begun to suspect they'd had her to fill an empty spot in their home decorating scheme, like the leather ottoman in the living room that no one ever put their feet on.

The realization that she was convenient furniture didn't much bother No. She didn't mind being ignored, especially when her mother contracted imaginary pandemics, and like the ottoman, she enjoyed the occasional compliment on her appearance from guests at her parents' parties. There was one key difference between her life and the ottoman's, though: the ottoman didn't get blamed for everything.

The ottoman never got yelled at for banging copper pans on the travertine tiles in the kitchen. When a few first edition Vonneguts showed up bent open on the floor of No's father's study, he never gave the ottoman a two-hour lecture on respecting classic literature. And had the ottoman ever protested, "It wasn't me! That painting jumped out of its own frame!" maybe No's parents would have believed it. If they believed in things like talking ottomans, which they didn't.

Read the rest [here](#).