

45 "Give me all your money," he repeated, but with less conviction.  
"Get out of this building!" I retorted.  
"Give me – " he began again.  
"Didn't you hear me?" I cut in. "Get out of here. Get out of here now."  
Suddenly he glanced up the stairs. "Well," he said, "okay". And he slipped out of the building  
50 just as smoothly as he had entered it.

For a moment, I stood there in a daze<sup>6</sup>, and then my knees began to shake. I put the grocery bags down on the floor and ran upstairs as fast as my wet-noodle legs would take me.

DANA T. PAYNE, *True Tales of American Life* (2001)

1. **deli** (n.): (short for "delicatessen") grocery selling fine, ethnic food
2. **stoop**: (US) small porch with steps in front of houses
3. **fan** (v.): what you do (with your hand or any other device) to create a current of air
4. **rent week**: time when your rent (what you pay for the use of a flat or house) is due
5. **foyer** /'fɔɪər/ (n.): (US) *hall d'entrée*
6. **in a daze**: stupefied