I fell asleep on the balcony and when I woke up it was covered in birds

The birds' eyes pointed in different directions because their heads had been swished by kids

I ran after them and the kids were faster than me

Their youthful legs pumping into the ground

I imagine how their skin looks without any hair

Like plastic

I put the birds into a container and I pressed down on them until I felt their bones snapping

I could feel it in my teeth and I had to throw up

I thought about what it would feel like to have boiling water injected into my brain

But I didn't do it

The kids might be back

I thought

I thought they might be back

It was after lunch now

I grabbed a couple of bags of old garbage

And a lamp I couldn't fix

And threw them off the balcony

But there was no one there

The sun had dried the blood and there wasn't even a stain

And then the container didn't exist either

I used my razor to cut down the shag carpeting in the living room

After that it was the next day and I didn't know if was a school day or not

The sun was still shining so I wrapped my head in towels and slept in the bathroom

There's no window in there

I could feel the bones snapping in my teeth again and I felt sick so I got up

Someone had broken into my apartment and stolen my television and replaced it with a smashed up one

I threw it off the balcony but the kids had gone to school

I hoped that they grew up to become doctors or tv hosts or brick layers

There wasn't much left of the couch so I sat on the chair

Everything smelled terrible

I had to get outside but the balcony was sinking further and further down and the sounds from upstairs were really loud today

I can't imagine what happened to the broom

So I had to shout at them but it didn't work

The noise was worse and the balcony kept sinking down

Pretty soon anybody who wanted to would be able to walk in off the street and straight into my window

I set a trap with some tar and glass out there

And a bell to tell me if anyone was getting in

It smelled worse

There was a door I hadn't seen in years and there was a feeling I got looking at it that made me nervous so I left it alone

And pretty soon it was gone again

My shoes had started caking open like dirt

My feet were open

There was glass and tar stuck inside them and blood all over the apartment

I had to cut it out of the shag carpeting and it made my head pound

There was something growing out of the side of my face

And I tried to cut it off with a piece of the glass

But there was a bright light and I passed out

The blood on my face had cauterized to the carpet

I decided to lift the carpet entirely

But I had no tools

So I started out by cutting big holes with a knife

I was pulling it out and I didn't know what to do with it so I burned it
The blue fibers were made of plastic and melted
It smelled a lot better than it had
The kids were back
And I could hear them doing terrible things outside
I grabbed the last thing I had of hers left and sat by the door waiting for them to come in

Geoffrey Simon Brown