

## Guest Room

I have made a ceramic mistake; wasted the work of the kiln fire. My mother doesn't need an outlet cover anymore. Sometimes rooms heal themselves, faster after children leave, when wounds have less to close around. The house is considering my weight; the pale pink carpet has failed to forgive the drugstore creams and uncapped lipsticks, the memory of abuse by a perpetrator in a shameless v-necked shirt. The wallpaper was already dead when it fell, when the pink and blue flowers crumpled inside a garbage bag; a farewell to my sales pitch that I would stay chaste; that I had no plans for my body except to march it to university. I am quiet now. We both know I have marched in all directions; we're tired with this knowing. This next act is a gift she will give me, removing one white outlet in this guest-room, a neutral retreat for anyone she chooses to care for, to provide pillows for. She is fumbling with the screw-driver, and I watch her mouth work her lefty-loosey chant, then righty-tighty, finally aligning my stenciled hopes, its two flowers crooked, the glazed corners bare. We are both wanting to crawl through the slots and shock ourselves.