

Hot Lava Carpets

by Rudis Muiznieks

"The carpet's hot lava," my son cries, pointing at the ground from the sofa.

"Yeowch!" I say, leaping next to him.

We sit together for a moment, silently contemplating our predicament.

"We need to get downstairs," I tell him. He nods, but does not move. He stares at the hot lava carpet.

"We can walk on the train tracks!" he says, pointing at one of the many segments of track strewn across the floor.

I shake my head. "It's too far," I say.

His mother calls to us from the kitchen; dinner's ready.

We look at each other with grim determination.

"You're the younger generation," I say. "It's my job to protect you. Use me as a bridge."

I scoot to the side of the sofa nearest to the door, and give my wide-eyed son one last glance. "I love you."

I throw myself on the ground, writhing and moaning in pain. "Go! Ow! Ow! Before I sink completely!"

My son giggles as he steps on my legs. I keep groaning, and do my best to burn this moment into my memory. When hot lava carpets

and scattered train tracks are a thing of the past, I still want this. I want to feel the pressure of his feet moving along my back, and hear his hysterical laughter as I gently roll from side to side.

He takes one final leap off my shoulder and makes it through the door to safety. I stop swaying and lay still.

His laughter dies down. "Daddy?" he says.

