

Too Quiet on the Carpet

by Ben White

So my father turned into a crab, big fucking deal. Shit happens, and it happens to grown men who sit on their vintage/hIDEOUS 1970s shit-brown corduroy couch while watching the Price is Right like an overweight stay-at-home Mrs. Cleans-a-Lot, such as my mother, who incidentally is pissed, I assume because their sex life—which I hope at their age was a joke—is most definitely in the gutter. I've seen the pinch marks. It can't be worth it.

As if he didn't lounge around the house enough since he got disability, now he just watches the game shows all day long, hogging an entire couch cushion (like he needs it) and staring at the screen with those creepy little crab eyes. I know, he's my father, he can't help it—but yeech.

And during commercial breaks when we sit and watch Law & Order together, I'll hear quick clicks on the kitchen and bathroom tiles—little pattering warnings as he goes about picking up snack crumbs from the floor and leaving little crab dumps on the mat my mom put down in the bathroom (don't you dare leave any souvenirs in the kitchen, she says, you're better than that). But on the carpet, he's too quiet. You can't hear him. He sneaks up on you. He just pops out, beady little eyes coming out of nowhere. Mom and I walk around the house wary like a driver changing lanes at night while looking for a motorcycle in his blind spot. I'm going to step on him one day. I just know it. I'm going to crush his little arthropod shell, destroy what's left of my father. And what then? What kind of son will that make me?

