

The Enemy

Clara Mok

My enemy marks his territory along my kitchen wall with strategic bombs.

“I’ll get you this time!” My heart beats in a war drum rhythm. On top of chasing an energetic toddler, I struggle to scrub black pellets off my pristine walls.

I recall Sun Tzu’s Art of War. *The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.*

I morph into a warrior and deal a deadly blow on my adversary. His tail detaches from his body, wriggling like a possessed being. *Art of deception.* I accord my adversary a new respect. He slides into the crack in the door hinge, skedaddles to the toilet and disappears behind the sink.

I set a triangular trap with sticky adhesives in his path, confident of having the upper hand. Every hour, I peer into the trap. “What? It’s not there?”

My toddler tugs at my apron.

“What is it, dear?” I follow her pointing fingers. There he is, perched on my toddler’s playpen.

“Lizard!” she mouths.

Isn’t that my toddler’s first uttered word? I do not expect my enemy to play the most despicable move in Sun Tzu’s book. *The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.*

I concede defeat.