

Not For Lack of Love or Want
by Andrew Hood

Before the baby there were things to learn, shit to get deft at and master.

“Buying stuff is not the same as doing stuff or learning stuff,” the girl he loved who he’d babied-up said. “Remember.”

At the guitar shop he demurred over banjos, figuring furrowed indecision would pass for knowledge. In the end, he bought the third most expensive. “I’d get the Gibson,” he assured the clerk, “but there’s a baby on the way.”

At home he put a finger pick on each finger, made cat claws.

“I think that’s too many picks,” the girl with the baby in her said.

“We’ll see,” he said, as he tried to figure out what was wrong with the internet so he could get on and prove her wrong.

Over the months, he ruined two good pots trying to make chocolate, cut off the tip of his finger buzzing wood for the crib, and his left arm still smarted sometimes from the shock he got putting another light in the nursery.

After the baby came out of the girl’s body, he didn’t like holding it. Not for lack of love or want, but a certainty that he would drop and kill the thing.