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Peeling

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Peeling

after ten years she has left
so I paint over
her cat's scratches on the windowsill,
food stains on the kitchen wall,
the acts splattered around in the bedroom,
and unmentionable errors in the bath—
a clean start will be at hand soon,
and after the last brush strokes,
I will peel the masking tape,
looking for the end that is under all the rest
so it all comes up in one long pull,
piece after piece wadded up,
sticky in my hand before I shake free of it,
the house's memory erased,
but not mine.

-Bruce Bagnell
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