The house.
The Moses basket rocks lonely in the wind. Computer mice lie upturned, their tiny red lights flashing warnings they couldn’t understand. The fruit isn’t rotten yet, but it’s not long now. A rug, made from what used to be a lamb gathers dust - if she could again, I think she’d cry. Because it’s been twelve days now and the door, still ajar, lets in a breeze which gently screams that they’re never coming back.

Soon their pictures will be gone too. Some other thing will cry and laugh and love into these walls. Walls which aren’t their own. Walls which would cry back and scream these monsters gone if their lungs were big enough. Here will become someone else’s home. The shaky pencil trapped behind peeling, flowery wall paper declaring who “was here” before will go unnoticed until it’s too late. They’re not coming home, and even if they did, ‘here’ isn’t theirs to come home to anymore. But that won’t stop the flowers wilting, the bricks crumbling and the curtains fraying in agony at their loss.

Poppy Crossland
First Prize, 2019