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All That Was Said About the Korean War

by Benjamin Vogt

In the summers my grandparents would spray
poison on the juniper in front of their house.

The tree would soak as the bagworms, grown on to
branches like pine cones, dripped to the ground.

When I became too curious Grandma would
yell to get out of the way, to move downwind

and avoid the mist. But from behind Grandpa
I couldn't see a thing. His plaid shirt would

unfurl like loose sails around his gut, his heavy
arms bent and recoiled in the action like palm trees

under the rush of low-flying jets. From deep
in his shadow I could only sense the dying bugs,

the heavy-wet branches, the man with a
cigarette that balanced from his mouth like flesh.

That sweet air cut through my lungs like chlorine,
glued to my mind so that today, standing in the shower,

I understand there's nothing in the world to
protect me from dying, and that each year

the juniper now harbors every invasion.