Popsicle Sticks and Shoelaces

by Michael Alan Brich

I tried to live out there.
Didn't really like it. Wasn't that interesting.
Numbers and nickels and boxes of plastic.
Every so often a bowl or a blanket. Coffee
grinder or end
table.
Everyone said it is a good thing.
Fat smiles on butter sun faces.
You will get used to it
they said.
I tried but didn't
and started building the birdcage
for my head.
The construction slow and deliberate.
Late at night. Small pieces added while they slept.
A cocktail straw toothpicks
a rubber band or two a patch of aluminum foil
popsicle sticks and shoelaces.
I began wearing it.
Just at night. Alone.
Months past. Construction continued.
I wore it in public.
In daylight.
No one noticed.
The cage became ornate and gothic.
Cornices and parapets rising in junk geometry
off the sides.
No one noticed.
An afternoon on the street.
An upturned lip of sidewalk.
I tripped. I fell.
The cage shattered on the concrete.
Faces circled looking down
At the popsicle sticks and shoelaces that spread
around my head
like a halo or a noose.