

BATTERIES INCLUDED

I stubbed my bare toe on a carpet staple and lost a little blood.
A mini tirade took hold of me, directed at the long-gone carpet installers
who couldn't be bothered with details.
I wanted to take a close look at the vicious weapon
that had lain like a trap for months, waiting to slash when least expected.

I went to my fancy new tool box, opened the top drawer,
picked up the hefty new screw driver, and it said, "Please log in."
I was in no mood for jokes, so I ignored the noise.
But it repeated. "Please log in. Please log in."

I gave in and said, "My name is Santa Claus."
The screw driver was in no mood for jokes either and said,
"For security reasons I must ask you to log in with your full real name."

When I bought this new screw driver I had noticed the term "data ready."
I had been impressed, but I was in a hurry and didn't check out the details.
Now I wished I had gone cheap and not spent the extra few dollars
for the microprocessor, the tiny loudspeaker and of course the batteries – included for once.
Ah-hah! I took out the batteries with a flourish and defeated the little monster.
What satisfaction, what a sense of power swept over me
as I lobotomized the tool back to its basics.

I jammed the blade under the wicked staple in the carpet and twisted the handle.
Too easy, the blade did not twist – the transmission was in neutral.
No amount of pounding or raging would throw it into gear without the battery's power.
Creative new curses escaped my lips, and I threw down the malevolent machine.
Of course I could have used the blade simply as a lever by rocking it on
another small tool as a fulcrum, but now there was principle involved:
A screw driver must support twisting functions or it is only a dull chisel,
and I will not give it the satisfaction of serving me at all.

I imagined putting my face to the rug and ripping the staple out with my teeth.
But in the end I went back to the tool box and got a rusty old screwdriver,
which did the job with no pain, no blood, no battery.

I may be in danger of falling behind the times and not keeping up with technology.
Am I slipping into old-age, putting "the good old days" on a pedestal?
I take both screwdrivers back to the toolbox, drop them in.
My eye falls upon the new hammer that I have yet to try ... batteries included.

