

Leapt Upon From a Great Height

Thomas decided to kill the painter
who set up each morning below his window.

The little man with a big mustache
arrived each day just after sunrise,

propped a few canvases alongside the building,
opened an umbrella and a red and white chair.

As café visitors strolled by, the little man
watched them look at his paintings. Throughout the day

he smoked four cigars, occasionally sipped
from a flask. Thomas hadn't seen the man

sell a single painting in the four weeks he'd been
watching. Thomas was about to run

out of money, he'd have to leave the hotel,
find somewhere else to go. He knew

he couldn't go home, back to the states,
back to Idaho. Not after he'd killed a man.

He'd have all those paintings to care for,
for one thing. Plus the umbrella, plus

the red and white chair, the few square feet
of sidewalk below a window's billowing curtains.

--By Christopher Citro. First Published in *Ghoti*