

In retrospect there was little left and I could have noticed it sooner

Selena Knopp

The diffusion of my mother took place
Quietly at first. Yet
A lot louder after a while when
The curtains were ripped down
And changed for ones so thick and heavy,
Confining me to stuffy rooms until
My suffocation did not surprise.

The orange was replaced with blue,
Just not the good kind,
The dull greyish kind that
Reminded me of bad hostels and mental wards.
Imitating the presence of colour, but
Not quite brave enough to be a colour itself.
Ornamental teacups switched for
A bottle of vodka with a piece of
Bison grass inside, a taste of mouldy citrus.
Not knowing what it meant, I
Sometimes took a sip of it before school,
Still thinking drinking was childish.
And I smoked her cigarettes
In the shower, between unfinished tiles
And rotten silicone.

What emerged was an irregular pattern,
But a pattern nonetheless that
Could not be hidden behind a stilted laugh
On the park bench, or knowing the right time to
Pull his vocal fold taut
(which would give you chills every time) and
When to explode into the glottis
(no reaction) strewing
The smallest particles across untreated wood,



In the end we set fire to the couch and
Decided to exist without definition.

Large drops of my newfound awe of
Anastomosing vessels



Imitating the presence
of colour, but
Not quite brave enough to
be a colour itself.

Which ripened into a fetid smell of
Artificial sweetener and opaque plastic.

I felt I could see my mother's edges
Liquifying into a shape that I could
Never quite determine, though not for
A lack of trying. Giving her
So many nicknames it was hard to keep up but
Never mum, because it did not feel appropriate
To push something like this into something like that
and
Getting a sense of her
By indulging in reading her emails, my heart stuck
In my throat and a burning sensation along the
oesophagus, but
Alone with her at last.

In the end, we set fire to the couch and
Decided to exist without definition.
Choosing red curtains this time that would turn your skin
Translucent when the sun came in,
Exposing every vein beneath, like
Being covered in a vague mycelium, grasping
Large drops of my newfound awe of
Anastomosing vessels and
Never feeling vulnerable again.

*a fetid smell of artificial sweetener
and opaque plastic*