
POETRY | SPRING 2021

Dementia Waltz

By Kathryn Paul

Shuffling my mother travels
from table to sink to bowl to cat
to sink to table, shuffling
in a well-worn groove from bowl to sink to cat
to table—

No: sink before table, after cat,
then bowl, then table. Don't

interrupt her, I've learned. Her shuffle
is not temporary, not a passing
table sink bowl cat sink table phase.

It's where we're living while
cat, bowl, sink, table, cat
play the shuffling rhythm of these days
in the kitchen where we can still
talk about the birds she loves,

the birds I have quite forgotten, lost
as I've become in her
shuffling, her cat, her bowl, her table.

I stand beside her at the sink where the water runs
warm over her hands as she forgets the blue bowl, forgets
she's already fed the cat—

Together we stand listening
to the stream, looking out the window
and delighting in the birds.

Kathryn Paul (Kathy) is a survivor of many things, including cancer and downsizing. Her poems have appeared in Rogue Agent, Hospital Drive, The Ekphrastic Review, Lunch Ticket, Stirring: A Literary Collection, Pictures of Poets and Poets Unite! The LiTFUSE @10 Anthology.

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