

A Woman, Illuminated, in a Crowded room.

She has a straight back
pressed up against her chair.
A string keeping her in line with
the zenith,
like my mother.

I'm wearing spotted pajamas
my eyes are heavy and bloated.
They fight some evenings.
Wrong apples again?
I threw myself down the stairs
where I eavesdropped,
but not really.
I hadn't time to beat her steps
to the yellow bed I sleep in.
She walks with a purpose,
her head straight with her back,
to tuck me in.
She stays until I breathe rhythmically,
audibly.
She searches the curls flying irregularly
around my head,
and turns to stone.
I hold her still even as I sleep.

The woman,
illuminated,
in a room without space to grow
has slumped a little
to sleep.
She rests her head on her left shoulder.
She'll hurt when she wakes up.

-Leah Anderst