

Is this a mantra? mantra of

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dust—I don't know I
don't know I don't know—mantra
of the million times one says

a million times. My mother floated
between us at the end like some
island adrift, broken off
the continent. And we kept alert

for sightings, stirrings, *any*
coming to that might
might might—another
mantra we kept at each night,

returning to that house
with her not in it.
But she's not in the hospital either—
my brother, so bluntly.