

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Something like radiance is crossing my wife's face.
She won't admit it. I won't press her.
Now, while they happen, here are the facts:
my son is staring up into his mother's eyes;
we are standing in the kitchen at the day's beginning,
half-asleep over mugs of chicory swirling with cream;
he has just barreled in, five today, demanding
a cup of juice from her, not me. Not you,
he repeats. Of course, she fetches it, obedient.
Of course, I awakened the same slavery in my mother,
the need to be commanded by a man-child who is other,
forty years back. What boy could ask his father
with a glance to be maidservant and Queen of Heaven?
Tonight I will type my mother a short letter
since she has written me the facts about her vision —
that there is no cure for progressive scarring
of the retina from five years back and now she reads
slowly with a magnifying glass. I will detail
the feats of her grandson at his birthday party,
leaving out this morning's epiphany. Of course,
the instant he was born she could foresee this moment
because in her eyes he is her son, diminished,
and it is no one's business now how she relinquished me.