

Witness

by Julia McDaniel

When my dad told me about the disease,
he described it as stitch-ripper
in her mind—not a crumbling tragedy,
but a breaking open, an avalanche
of memory. I take the jigsaw puzzle
of the wild horses on the beach, but she speaks
only of sand, how she misses it in Minnesota,
where she doesn't live anymore.
And then I am a ghost, not a granddaughter.

She goes on about the fence they must build
in the yard to keep the strays out,
and I study the mark on her forearm
she got from putting it up.
In her frenzied speech, there is an un-scarring;
empty of landmarks, her life is beginning.