

Trailer Trash

July Westhale

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July Westhale's poetry seems accompanied with a tuning fork's pitch, a heightened, pressing, weaponized immediacy. Whatever she faced to earn that ability would have killed a lesser mortal, we can be sure.

A creative writing, history, and English professor at Cogswell College, she's an accomplished essayist, children's book author, and reproductive health advocate. Next up: a graphic novel about queer femme friendships.

DEAD MOM REPRISE

*Dead mom is many things, but always dead. Nothing
kills a conversation like a dead mom. What are you,
dead mom? Whatever
is left of you is what I pray to. Dead mom makes lunches.
Dead mom is the man on the corner with two cigarettes. Dead
mom wanders the hallways at night, eating pickles from a jar.
I call out for you by your rightful name, dead mom, every time
you die. Dead mom, you die every day. You move, and bury yourself
next to me. Dead mom, you would sleep if you could, but dead moms don't
sleep, they burn. Dead mom, I eat ashes to know what heaven does
to the body. Nobody reads poetry, especially not dead moms,
but dead moms hand out tickets at theaters, they bag groceries, they turn
their heads just so, so in the right light they reflect off of everything.
The marquee is always showing dead mom. Let me live, dead mom.
Forget roses. Forget forget-me-nots. Forget bulbs that wait forever
to finally shoot into recognition months later. Plant rows and rows
of dead mom, because it will seed like crazy, and you will never be able to kill it.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (LGBTQ+ 2018)

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