

## Joelle Taylor

### Mother's Milk

My mother has breast cancer  
Breast cancer has my mother  
The life giver  
Has turned upon her.

The breast  
Bit  
Back.

We follow in our mother's footsteps  
Not our father's.

The thin black spider  
Squats at the spiny top  
And suckles the milk  
Before it can  
Succour her children  
And this spider  
Corrupt  
Fingering lymph-like worry beads  
Feeds  
And grows still thinner  
On our future.

And now the veins  
Of her empty breasts

Envelopes without letters  
Are clogged with litter  
Her shelves are empty  
Children  
Queue.

It spreads  
Its insectile legs  
Like the sickly roots  
Of a needy tree  
Until they  
Become her veins  
Her streets  
That we once kicked and scuffed  
Are now dust  
And useless air.

The life giver  
Has turned upon her.

I have hurt my heart mum  
See?  
It bleeds.

My mother is dying  
But still she breathes  
Denies  
Knits  
Reads  
As her breast  
Bites back  
And from our  
Beautiful future  
Feeds.