

GIVING MY FATHER FRIGHTS

We discover no end of windows
of opportunity for giving my father frights.

Our house is for hiding in.

We crouch in the porch, waiting for the bend of his shadow.

The frightening of him

happens in slow, simultaneous motion: we leap
and my father's feet

explode from the floor

and like a man falling he roars –

we nest in the pantry. He comes searching for tea

and finds us instead, flared eyes and limbs

springing at him, blowing chip packets and muesli into the air –

we fold into chests

we hang motionless in the long curtains

we hide in his suits, in the wardrobe

and once in the ceiling –

dropping like spiders onto the bed

beside him, as he is sleeping. There is no sound

like my father's roar, its fury and fear,

each time we burst out at him

like the living dead.

It is the sound of wishing

for a time when

a doorway was a welcome

the pantry unforthcoming

the wardrobe hung only with clothes:

all the empty suits, waiting.

Ashleigh Young

Giving My Father Frights

by Ashleigh Young

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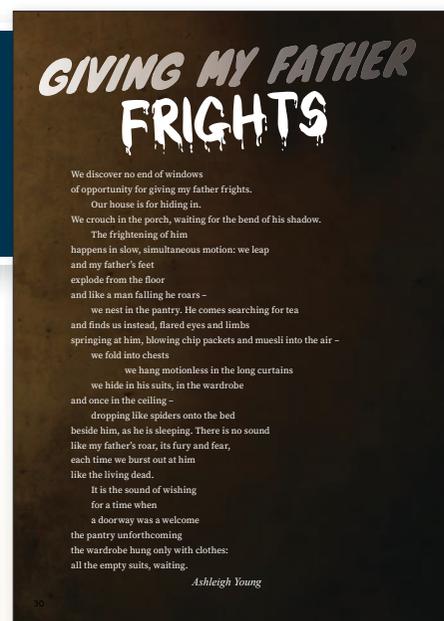
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