

The Wake

Ari Brander

The day before she died
the package I sent for her birthday arrived
with a piece of amethyst and the instructions

Place it next to your bed. You will forever be protected.

A softly spoken mouth on a harsh rod of bark.
Arched purples, yawning lips, dead man's fingers
now have her.

a violet kitchen of petals in her name and
the shadows of visitors muddling the blue and
the voices ringing the walls of vacancy and
the Shiva bread shoved down my throat and
the eyes and eyes and eyes and
the heavy shoes walking their sorrow across my pinched neck and
the bodies needing to hold my body and
the *I'm sorrys* and
the doorbells and
the casseroles and
the dogs barking with each knock and knock and
my petrification amid the wails,
and the bodies, and the eyes,
and the shoes, and the food, and the orchids,
and the amethyst on her nightstand.