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## Dementia: Her Head Cut Off

Katharine Johnsen

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*Katharine Johnsen*

## **DEMENTIA: HER HEAD CUT OFF**

Maybe she left the kitchen  
to rest on the sofa, relieve  
her swelling ankles

while the water boiled  
for tea, or she walked

down the hallway  
for a pair of reading glasses  
on the nightstand.

Maybe she sat on the bed  
she no longer shares, picked

up the remote, flipped  
on a talk show.  
She doesn't remember.

The kettle whistles.  
After all the water turns

to steam and forces  
its way out, the copper  
bottom burns and the kitchen

smokes. She refuses to  
jeopardize her independence,

forges ahead rather than  
call for help. In the pantry  
new kettles roost like hens.