

Family Leave

by Laura McCollough Moss

That's it
don't be restless now
Dial soap
hot water in a plastic basin
squeeze the cloth tight
wrap it around your hand
like a mitt
never forgot that
press the moist, clean-smelling warmth
gently against her face and
hear the grateful sigh
Wipe the eyes carefully
outward from the inside corner
each side of the nose
wet the lips
dip
rinse
"I was thinking,"
she rasps
"About the restaurant.
Mike could make up boxed lunches.
He could have specials with
a different sandwich featured every day."
There's a pause while I stare into the cloudy water
tears piercing my eyes
She looks at me
"What's wrong Honey?"
I look at her
really look
we both know her time is fading
"I'm just sad that you won't be there."
I take her hand and clean between the fingers.

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/laura-mccollough-moss/family-leave>»*

Copyright © 2012 Laura McCollough Moss. All rights reserved.

There's so little I can do and yet
it is everything.
She doesn't look now
closes her eyes
"I'll be there,"
she says
Picking up the towel
I know
she will.

