Lunch Break, Brave Face

Aidan Kunju

Paul Kalanithi Writing Award Genre:

Poetry
My mother began seeing patients only from home;
immunocompromised from treatments
she was optimistic when the pandemic began
I was scared about the spots found in her brain
she comes downstairs during her
break to eat lunch
and tends to her African violets
flourishing in the may sunlight
from the kitchen window
she asks us- rajma for dinner?
she soaks the little red beans
before walking
it beats into the house
and warms it, making her symptoms flare
she progresses
quick swallow the vitamins
they grow so fast…
hers inbox fills steady typing with numb fingers
I get her a fresh ice pack and lemon
in water
one patient at a time
her vigor drains.