

# How to Live With Being Your Mother's Gay Daughter

By Esse Prasad

i.

your cousin got married, she says, distant.  
he's a good boy and it was a beautiful wedding.  
a longing weight in her words,  
an anchor sinking endlessly with no ground to strike,  
falling. falling, like her eyes, sleepless and heavy from hours of labour—  
(*for you*, sings the blood in your veins)  
that's nice, you say, an apology, a prayer.  
her mouth twists, but nothing more.  
and to you, tired and heartsick,  
this is a victory.

li.

more often than not, your girlfriend offers no solace.  
I don't understand, she says.  
maybe you should stop talking to her altogether.  
you hate her, deeply.  
you love her, deeply  
for thinking you deserve better,  
but deserving is not wanting.  
you say nothing and close your eyes and  
kiss her,  
and taste only saltwater and regret.

iii.

you know to cup your happiness in your palms  
in all its beautiful, burdened glory,  
and bury it  
in an iron cage of guilt.  
the curse of being known by your mother is  
that she will know your joy to spring from  
the one thing that she cannot bring herself to name.  
and at least knowledge  
is one way to spare her.

iv.

you will forever yearn for  
a benediction that you shouldn't need,  
and she will forever yearn for

the future you promised with your birth,  
and all you both will have is this:  
love, wounded and bleeding and colouring  
every word between you scarlet,  
and the knowledge that it is not enough.