

Aba doesn't talk about his childhood much. Or the little girl. It's Mama.
Who tells me about her. That they played together. On Shabbat. After.
His father died. & Safta had to work. Two jobs & would take. No help
from anyone. Mama's never asked. If that household kept the Sabbath.
Or what they believed. Mama showing rare restraint. Until it was discovered.
She contracted. Polio. & Safta burned his clothes. & she burned what little.
Toys they. Shared. & her own. Pantyhose. Even those the little one hadn't torn.
& grabbed. For balance. But still my father. Was exposed. & suffered. His eyes, his
spine. A whole host. *She died*. I'm told. Mama's breath. Hot on my skin. She's rubbing
around the sting. In my neck. That burns. & fades. To numbness. Along arm. &
shoulder. I'm a little numb these days. On my left side. It's not metaphorical. It's not

political. Or related. Though I wish. Perhaps, another.
Life. *She died*. & she. Holds me. My mother. Closer, pushing.
Down. Where I can't really. Feel. *You have to be strong*. & it's when.
She pulls away. I feel the blood. Running. From sharp. Sharp. Nails.