My mother’s mother, widowed very young of her first love, and of that love’s first fruit, moved through her father’s farm, her country tongue and country heart anaesthetized and mute with labor. So her kind was taught to do—“Find work,” she would reply to every grief—and her one dictum, whether false or true, tolled heavy with her passionate belief. Widowed again, with children, in her prime, she spoke so little it was hard to bear so much composure, such a truce with time spent in the lifelong practice of despair. But I recall her floors, scrubbed white as bone, her dishes, and how painfully they shone.

Source: Poetry