

On the Table

The ballpoint pen lies on the table,
not the expensive kind,
but the Staples pack of 12 for \$2;
the same one she uses to write me illegible letters that I throw away.

Right next to it is the lopsided white and forest green mug I made her for her birthday.
She says she drinks from it often, even though I haven't seen her do so.
She claims I'm not home enough to know, but I shrug,
because she uses the Dollar Store plates my brother bought her.

Underneath, a mess of cables poke out,
the same ones I've tripped over hundreds of times.
The ones that caused a sprained ankle that I still feel every day,
the ones that we both left there waiting for the other to cleanup.

Completed crossword puzzles are scattered,
the puzzles she had to cheat on to complete,
just like she does with everything else,
just like I do with everything else.

At the table is her empty smile,
the same one she has had for years,
because she knows her young heart is becoming old,
while I was born old.

On the opposite side, I sit in denial,
one of the things I've always done.
I think she's okay, but she's not.
I close my eyes to open them again and when I do she's no longer at the table.

Viola Brown