

Porous

Paola Bilbrough

At six I was porous: an outline
filled with shifting colour.
My mother was somewhere in France:

I dreamt of the salt between us,
waves swallowing all sound.
My teeth sang—each with a different tune

and one by one were pulled out.
Hitching from the dentist's with my father,
I noted abandoned houses,

tried on each like a coat.
Curled up in the rooms
I piled objects around me:

cups and saucers lipped with gold,
a brotherhood of chairs.
Cars passed as the day edged towards dark.

Paola Bilbrough is a filmmaker, widely published poet, and scholar whose work sits at the juncture of art and critical ethnography. She is particularly interested in collaborative and auto/biographical work and tensions between ethics and aesthetics. She is a lecturer at Victoria University, Melbourne.