

THIS IS YOUR MOTHER

by Brian Bell

'Brian, this is your mother,'
the voice was firm, irritated,
if not a touch self-aware,
she was talking to a machine,
as if it were human.

'Your father is ready to inspect your car,
but you forgot to leave the owners' card.
he needs that to inspect it.'

Two years of dust,
and an un-played message
preserved on an answering machine.

The voice,
absorbed in daily routine,
silenced by cancer a year later,
could hardly fathom, then, the effect
it would have on her son now.

Listening repeatedly to the nuances of her voice,
laughing at her mundane agitation,
he says yet another goodbye,
as he resets the machine,
to record over the last words,
he would ever hear from her.