

Kay Ryan

THINGS SHOULDN'T BE SO HARD

A life should leave  
deep tracks:  
ruts where she  
went out and back  
to get the mail  
or move the hose  
around the yard;  
where she used to  
stand before the sink,  
a worn-out place;  
beneath her hand  
the china knobs  
rubbed down to  
white pastilles;  
the switch she  
used to feel for  
in the dark  
almost erased.  
Her things should  
keep her marks.  
The passage

of a life should show;  
it should abrade.  
And when life stops,  
a certain space—  
however small—  
should be left scarred  
by the grand and  
damaging parade.  
Things shouldn't  
be so hard.