

Fearful: Barbara Bernasconi-Curtis

Our mother had died unexpectedly: hypothermia in suburbia.

Fell, hit her head, unconscious, and a cold snap during a late May weekend did the job.

Found on Monday morning as her groceries were delivered. 000; police officers; ambulance; coroner: the works.

Sitting in the garage awaiting advice, in sight of all the comings and goings, was quite therapeutic. Brain numbed but body tingling.

Months later. It is night and I had been asleep.

I felt it at first but didn't open my eyes. Then slowly I opened them to a charcoal dark – scuro, no chiaro – nebula suspended in the space ahead. Didn't even blink, brow furrowed, taking it in. I closed my eyes again. Stock still, waiting. It felt like the nebula wafted closer. Eyes shut tighter, sizing up whether there would be hurt.

No.

But fear, yes.

I quickly supposed that it was my mother's presence checking on me: distant but loving in her way – so typical.

I was the one who found her dead.

She came back one more time.

No longer fearful but complete.