

"Public Domain" by Alison C. Rollins

You catalog by hand, playing librarian in your dead
mother's house. Try to justify archiving each item:

A balanced checkbook. Mothballs. Life Savers
mints. Back copies of the *New York Times*.

Frozen chicken pot pies. The Yellow Pages.
Expired Lorna Doone cookies long expired. Panty hose.

A pair of Daniel Green slippers from
Lord & Taylor. Flat Canada Dry ginger ale.

You find a little girl hiding in Mr. Rogers' mustard
sweater, sew on and sew forth, threading needles

with pubic hairs discovered in the carpet. Surreal
smells. The Pine-Sol dying down in the bathroom.

Which was your father's bad ear? The one that lost
most of its hearing in the war. There is life in the eyes

unspoken. Your very pulse a secret algorithm, a soft-
ware designed to track your browsing history.

An open casket on view for the whole church to see.
Her genetic code made available for live streaming.

You copyright the notes in the margins of her Bible.
The intellectual property preserved. Shaky cursive

her signature trademark. Upon the fall of a domestic
sphere, a pocketbook is emptied of all its valuables.

To become takes a long time. Blue spells are periods of
red where you pause, the body calculating the losses.