

## Playing Cards (after June Jordan)

Hari Berrow

It smells of wine they want you to forget is cheap.

You sit, cards in front of you,

Trying to just remember the name of the game that you're supposed to be playing,

Let alone the rules.

You think you have given yourself TMJ

From cementing your lips and eyes into something akin to a smile.

His dad asks you if you're having a good time with it

And you feel your muscles ache again as you say

'I'm not sure I really get it, Keith'.

His mother rolls her eyes, turns her head,

Picks up her sour glass of pink, and says,

'You just don't know how to have fun, do you Hari?

His brother's new girlfriend will have a drink with me.

Don't you think she picks up rules better too, Keith?

You know, I really wish Rob's new girlfriend was here instead'.

You're stuck like this forever now.

You've given yourself botched botox from trying to please this woman.

You wonder if there is a way to simply disintegrate into the carpet.

From the way she chugs her rosé,

His mother is thinking the same.

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*Hari Berrow is a working-class writer, academic and arts journalist based in South Wales. She has a Substack where she complains about nature.*