

Patience Stillwater's Sestina

How could he be so mean
to think their son was now worth nothing?
Being gay was no longer a sin.
Patience Stillwater had to keep her cool
to safeguard her son's inheritance and life
from a man who, long ago, had lost their trust.

"He's out of the family and I'm ending his trust.
Your mommy-ing changed him to Queen from Mean."
"Oh, Don. Please don't disrupt Leo's college studies and life."
"Why not?" Don snarled. "Now he's just a good-for-nothing."
Patience closed the freezer door, a cool
long, sharp, steel chopstick in her hand - a sin

at her fingertips. She listened to his hateful rantings, sin-
filled threats against her son, her child whose trust
she would never betray. Her smile grew icy. Cool.
She knew what it could mean
if she was caught, but nothing
meant more to her than a good life

for her son. So, she took Don's life
with the icicle-covered-chopstick into his chest. Is it a sin
to protect a son, or to do absolutely nothing?
She dried the water around his corpse, had trusted
no-one with her plan to dispose of her mean-
spirited tormentor whose warm blood oozed onto the cool

kitchen tile. She dialed 9-1-1, screamed and cried to hide cool
intentions; prepped for the performance of her life.
"We aren't sure what all this could mean."
The confused policeman was gentle, calm, cool.
"You are as confused as us, I trust,"
he said. "A piercing in the heart, but we find nothing

that could have caused it." Sniffing, Patience repeated, "Nothing?"
"No, Ma'am. But, we will find out who committed this sin."
Patience dabbed her eyes with a damp hanky and said, "I do trust
you will do your best, and this tragedy won't ruin my life."
Smiling, she stopped him and went to the freezer. She took out a cool
icicle. This one mango-sweet and juicy, not plain, murderous and mean.

He agreed, "There is nothing more to do now, but get on with your life."
She handed him the ice: "So sinful of me not to have offered you something cool.
Trust me, being distraught is no excuse to be mean."