Dancing in a Paper Hat

Resurrected via the godless miracle of VHS,

my mother, dead at 92, is dancing in a paper hat
to Signor Pavarotti’s ‘La Donna è Mobile’.

The screen has reassembled here the ashes we’ve just spread —

and a Christmas full of children, eighteen years before.

Her hands, almost balletic, dismiss our small considerations,

our sibling cons and pros of how she bent us this way, that.

They give us back what we’d forgotten: our mother in a party hat,

the widow of a stricken year, this grandma high there on sprung toes,

*en pointe* with *joie de vivre* and the children of her kids.