

A TABLE IS A FLAT SURFACE WITH LEGS  
—CE N'EST PAST UNE PIPE

[The sighted woman asks the blind man, *how do you see beauty?* The blind man replies, *In the same way you close your eyes & imagine taking a warm bath, how it feels to float—this is how I see beauty.*]

WE SIT in the dark of the room.  
the ophthalmologist instructs my  
husband to move his head forward  
place his chin here his forehead  
there takes her ophthalmoscope &  
checks his retina for threatening new  
bleeds his macula for further  
degeneration her keratometer to explore the sudden craters  
& soft folds in the parched paddock of his cornea. then  
she opens the manilla folder removes the lid from her  
mont blanc & carefully charts each new contour in the ordnance  
survey map of my husband's eyes. the ceiling light is turned back  
on. our pupils recoil in the fluorescence of its truth. a requiem in  
D minor exits the ophthalmologist's  
opening & closing mouth one note at a  
time like slow cars over a cliff as  
my husband's vision is committed to  
the ground earth to earth ashes dust  
etcetera with no hope of resurrection  
to eternal life. the ophthalmologist  
advises there'll be a letter to take to  
centrelink something about a pension  
card cheap travel discount on our  
water rates royal blind society  
scanners white canes magnifiers  
guide dogs concessions at the theatre  
two movie tickets for the price of one.  
outside rain pools in pavement  
drains blocked like tear ducts all beauty  
sucked like diesel from the petrol tank  
of the world. the sky, black as a  
detached retina riddled with  
blind spots is strewn with stars  
that twinkle like braille spelling out a  
million angry messages to god.

This poem is in response to the photograph '*Romance in Granada - The Blind*'  
by Sophie Calle and forms part of the '*Shadow Catchers*' exhibition at the AGNSW, 2020.