

Paper

Susan Grindley

There was certainly plenty of paper –
sheet music, self-help books, newspaper
cuttings in labelled envelopes, receipts
for every bill paid, everything she bought,
as if she thought she'd be called to account
for all her thrift. The Christmas cards
marked to be thrown away or kept – all kept.

I made my peace with hoarding and obsession
the day I found a copy of *The Times*
printed in gold when Armistice was signed,
counted the twenty-seven jade plants
evenly spaced around the local chip shop,
came back to find my brother in the garden
reading the gold news, wearing a top hat