

My Mother Speaks

I don't know when the day will come,
but one day you will say the words
I hate you, and it will not be out of wailing
spite as I velcro your light-up shoes
onto the wrong feet. It will not be after I rush
you out the door when you want five
more minutes with Barney's soft glow
on the TV. It will be when you want to grow—
out of these shoes, to walk out the door,
puttering down a winding road of choices.
Gone will be the warmth which radiates
through your fuzzy bath towel as I count
your pink toes with my lips. You will
rip a bite from the fruit of knowledge
and spit the acidic seeds back at me
from between your teeth. Sour words
that singe the blanket I drape over
outstretched arms. And when comfort has
drained from my being, when I stand
with tattered remains, I will still offer
you every last thread—willing you to take
my hands and count my fingers with your lips.