

My Brain This Morning

shoes-
with no socks- to
fill the bird-feeder- my feet look old-
my kids have such smooth, beautiful hands
and feet- do they think my feet look old- did I
think my mom's feet looked old when I was young-
did she even wear open-toed shoes- flip-flops-we called them
"thongs"- what did she wear to work-red lipstick, short skirt,
square-heeled pumps-no pointy heels behind the bar -(entangles
in the mats) bartender- so many years- that's what invited the
bladder cancer-second-hand smoke-she's grabbing her
crotch, moaning, Oh my God- Oh my God-every
time she urinates in her Depends-lying
on the bed-otherwise incoherent-
dying

***Superman* was Never Intended to be Viewed in Black & White**

In black and white

Superman,

the 1978 version.

An image of Christopher Reeve,

fists piercing confines,

fleeing Earth's atmosphere,

forever framed by the 8x8

television.

It's funny,

the things we remember.

Birthdays. Moving.

Endings and beginnings,

a yellow Ryder Truck.

Bittersweet dichotomy:

California, sun-filled classroom, friends.

Pennsylvania, gray cinder block walls, nuns.

9th birthday, looming.

Constant guest, anxiety

dread of unpredictability.

Childish hope and a mother's promise

a gigantic slumber party.

Sleeping bags, pillows, and innocence

dumping into a tiny,

two-bedroom rental.

A problem of

"Absent Parents"-

a future moniker and

timeless definition.

Naked in vulnerability,

working to convince guests.

Making excuses,
assuaging concerns.

Details

unimportant now.

The storm and leaves ripped from branches a
water-logged mass, carpeting the slick streets.

And the T.V.

our first newly-purchased, (used)

Color TV- the main event

broken.

It was the blood

they noticed first.

The leaves.

She said it was the leaves.

The Volkswagen Beetle had slid
right into the telephone pole.

No, no. She was fine

a broken nose- a few broken ribs.

The house emptied,

I watched her sleeping.

Familiar pangs of

disappointment and resolve,

quieted with overwhelming love.

Light from the screen

casting shadows

in black and white.

Missed Signs

The bus pulls away as it does every day, a snapshot of yellow in a framework of gray. After lessons and learning relayed and conveyed, connections with peers convincingly made, My role as a student so perfectly played, I stand at the corner, alone and afraid.

I fear not my surroundings, nor the path that I tread... The route is familiar along with the dread, the resolute realization of what lies ahead. Lord knows her "condition" can leave her half-dead. My need for security withers, unfed.

I'm turning the corner; my house is in view, anxiety turns a darker hue.
Oh my God, if you only knew
the hell and the heartache I've been through.
All the signs... you've misconstrued
while you, Mother, have come unglued.

Selective Memories are the only Gift of Dementia

I will send you a little note today.
Stationery bought with you in mind,
knowing you would admire
delicate purple flowers
bordering scalloped edges.
I see you- savoring
every word
beneath your smudged magnifying glass.

We talk on the phone
every day, reminiscing.
We laugh.
You say you feel better
just hearing my voice
you and Daddy will visit soon.
I used to call those words “pie-crust promises.”

It's hard to fathom
the missed opportunities,
the years you spent nursing a hangover
instead of my children.
With all of the states and circumstances
separating you from me,
my bitterness softens
with your ebbing memories.

Some of your days
are better than others.
Some days, you say
my dad is dead and ask me
if I've seen him lately.
You shout, “My time is almost up!”
Now the world has its own circumstances,

a virus to freeze us in place-but not in
time. I write my memory on
creamy-white paper (with purple
flowers.)

We take flight down the pier of the beach,

you carrying our shoes in one hand,

my toddler-hand tethered to your other.

Weaving through board-walkers, we chant, "Aua, Aua, Aua!"

in your German tongue. Grey-winged seagulls chuckle and mew

encouragement of our hot-footed flight.

A California pier stretches endlessly, and my blonde hair is

a comet's tail reaching back to the sea.