

Sunday Mornings

Sunday mornings were always saved for church
and church always required our best clothes.
Pressed and straightened and laid out for the morning
'cuz "who deserves the best more than God?"
That was commonly said by my daddy,
and we were always told that he knew best.

Sunday mornings were the best.
Everyone knew my family at church.
The pastor man would shake hands with my daddy,
and the ladies always raved over Mom's clothes.
They'd say our family was truly touched by God,
and I really felt that on those mornings.

But things were different that morning.
I tried to cover my ears. I did my best.
Mom crying, Daddy cursing, "Aw, God-"
We didn't really make it to church.
So Mom helped me put away my nice clothes
and made me stay away from Dad.

Why don't the men shake hands with Dad?
There are no smiles this Sunday morning.
My pretty new dress just feels like clothes.
My brother says it's for the best,
this no more spotlight on us at church.
They say we need prayer, we just need God.

Nothing is better, please help us, God.
Mom keeps crying out to you, Father,

You're not here, you're not even at church.
Do you hear her sobbing in the morning?
She keeps it concealed, she does her best,
but not all marks are hidden by clothes.

Long sleeves are now all of Mom's clothes.
I keep praying, as if there's even a God.
She deserves better, she deserves the best,
Not this man for a husband, a father.
But it's the same thing every Sunday morning.
They'll paint on their smiles and walk into church.

I no longer go with them to church.
He tries to make me wear those stupid, nice clothes,
and he's right there, but he's not my daddy.

Daddy's Son

Ma always cries at Daddy's name.
The others treat it like a game.
Mama looks at me as she stands.
She says I have my daddy's hands.

Same big brown eyes and bulky parts,
Have I the blackness of his heart?
And, despite what Ma wants to feel,
The resemblance is quite unreal.

I said sorry for hitting her.
I'm still not sure what in me spurred.
Ma has no fears, but just this one:
She says I am my daddy's son.

Normality

Clink, clink, rattle, rattle, bang, bang,
Go the metal cuffs on my wrists.
I am not crazy. That's the thing,
So why do they think me a risk?

No one hears, they don't hear a sound.
I am not crazy. They'll help, they said.
Can this so-called 'treatment' turn down
These voices inside of my head?

They told me to, *they* told me to!
Now my nurse is lying so still.
They hate what they tell me to do.
I'm not to go against *their* will.

They finally know, they finally see,
Oh yes, we're truly mad indeed.

On My Last Day

We wait in line, one by one,
Our futures tied with a neat loop
And bow by the brown rope,
And I want to go.
My mother is crying
Like on the day I saw my bride.
But she's gone now,
And I, too, want to go.
The scar down my neck
Was her last love note to me.
Her bloody nails clawing, pleading,
But, it wasn't *my* fault; she had to go.
These men are my friends
With their pasts just like mine,
But I don't understand.
Why don't they want to go?
Their tears will be no more
Once the men hang
Their sorrows behind them.
Their sweet cries fill the air,
Their own melody of gorgeous screams.
It's almost my turn now,
And I can't wait to go.